NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

NEW!

HISTORY

GENGHIS KHAN
BRILLIANT AND BRUTAL

CHEROKEE
FROM RESISTANCE TO REPUBLIC

SPARTACUS
THE SLAVE WHO ROCKED ROME

ALEXANDRIA
A WORLD OF KNOWLEDGE LOST

BABYLON
LAYING DOWN THE LAW

PLUS:
- MYSTERIOUS HEADS OF EASTER ISLAND
- PAMPERED PETS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

MIRACLES AND MEDICINE
HEALTH CARE IN ANCIENT GREECE

AUGUST/ SEPTEMBER 2015

eye to eye

Durban

SOUTH AFRICA

> “Every time I take a flight, I am always mindful of the many people who make a successful journey possible.”
>
> Inkosi Albert John Lutuli, Nobel peace prize 1960,
> Zulu Tribal Chief, 1936-1967 (Durban)

Durban (in Zulu ‘eThekwini’, derived from itheku meaning a bay or lagoon). A city established in 1824 on land granted by King Shaka. A fusion of citizens of Zulu, English and Indian heritage.
A tourist mecca for over 150 years.

Knowledge is power, as the maxim goes.

Great leaders have understood this for millennia, and wise men have sought to compile and conserve useful knowledge. Such was the mission of the Library of Alexandria in Egypt, featured in this month's issue. Some 2,300 years ago this center of learning began collecting and cataloging books from around the known world.

But as our article reveals, the maxim has a darker and more destructive side. While most are keen to absorb and build on the advances of others, some see knowledge as a threat to their power. Political and religious extremists fervently try to control the flow of information, a bigotry that often leads to the burning of books.

This seems to have been the fate of the Library of Alexandria, as accident and arson combined to destroy the greatest ever collection of classical writings. The loss to science, literature, and learning is immeasurable. Surviving works praise and reference the books that went up in flames, giving us tantalizing glimpses of what we will never know. It's a reminder that even today we must value the past and fight to preserve it.

Jon Heggie

Jon Heggie, Managing Editor

PHOTO: JAMES L. STANFIELD

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HISTORY

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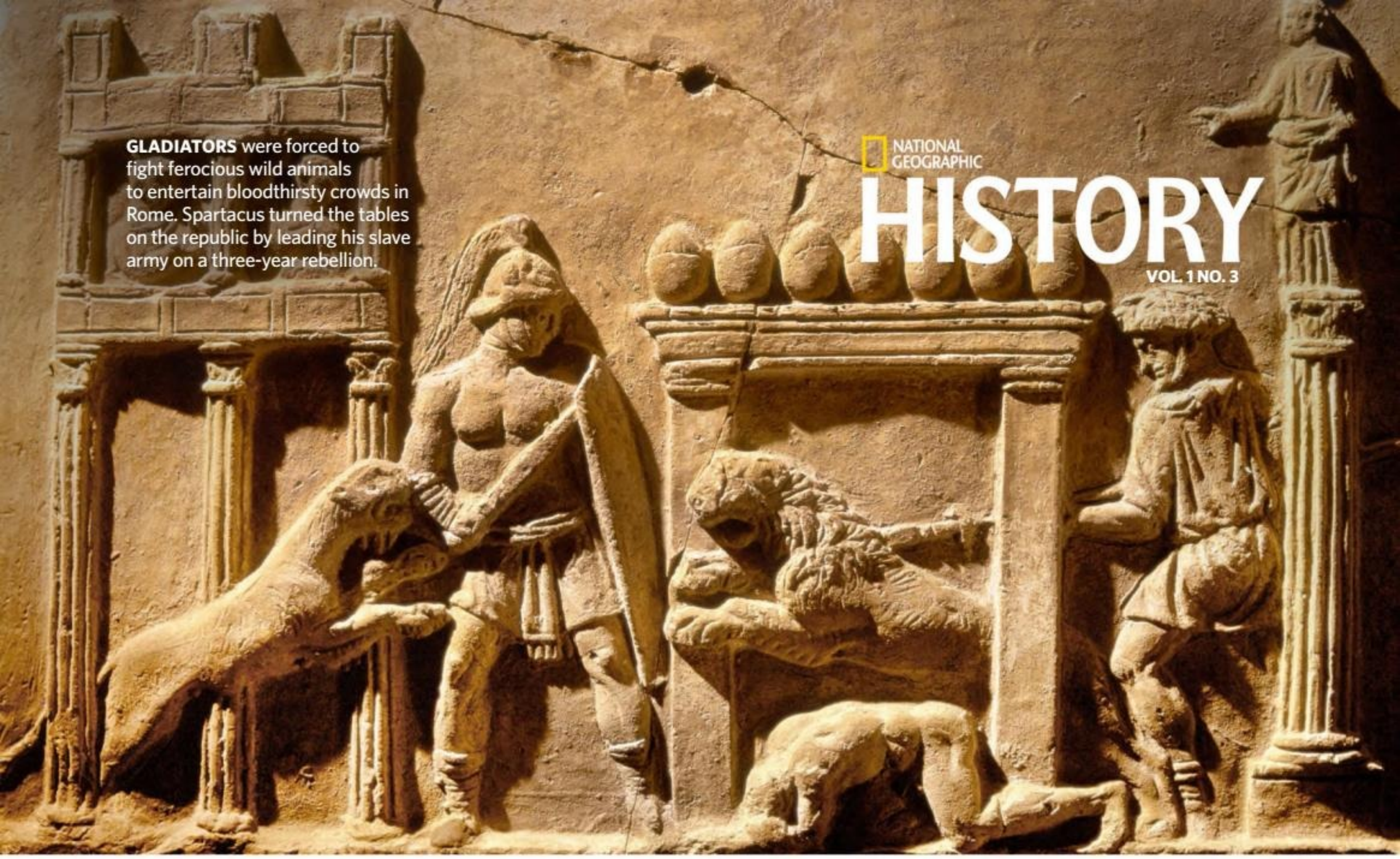

GLADIATORS were forced to fight ferocious wild animals to entertain bloodthirsty crowds in Rome. Spartacus turned the tables on the republic by leading his slave army on a three-year rebellion.

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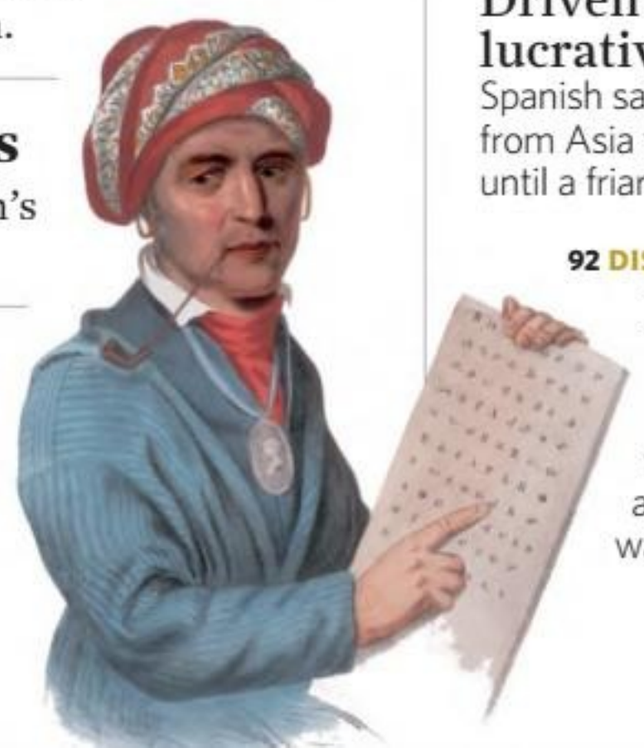

SEQUOYAH OF THE CHEROKEE WITH THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE HE CREATED

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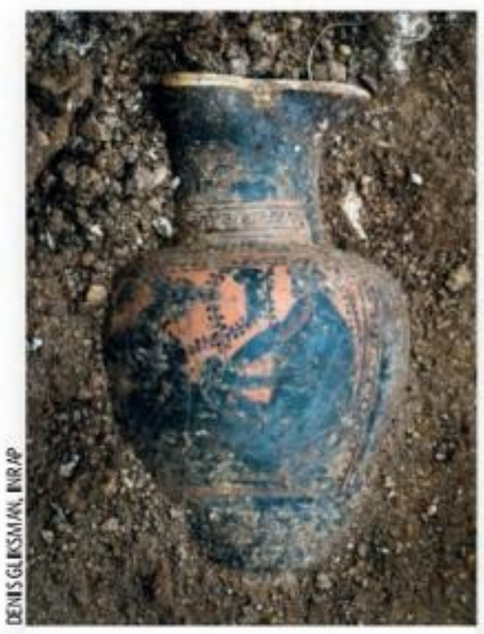
DENIS GLIKSMAN, INRAP



DENIS GLIKSMAN, INRAP

THIS GREEK CERAMIC wine pitcher found in Lavau has surprised experts with its great delicacy and its gold metalwork. It is considered an unparalleled treasure, with a quality surpassing even that of opulent burial objects found in Greece itself. It is believed it may have been customized to Celtic tastes.

CELTIC CULTURE

Weapons and Wine: Armed for the Afterlife

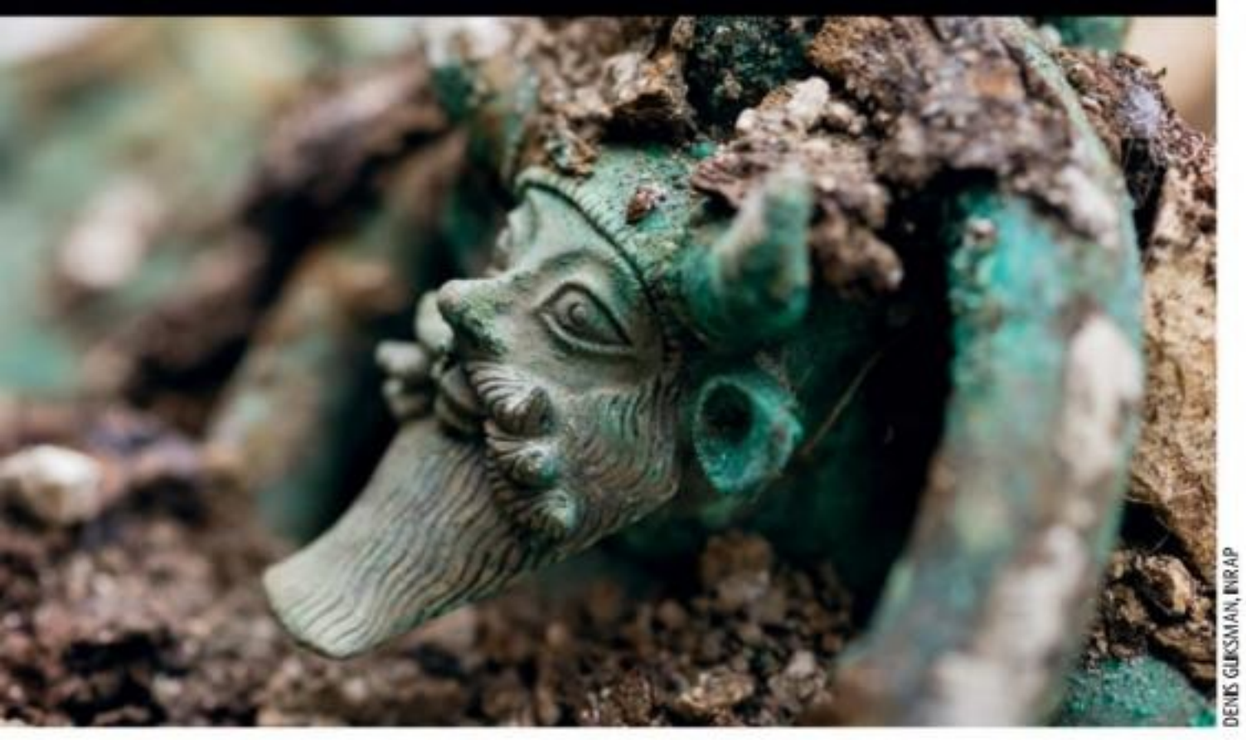
Excavations for a new shopping mall in France unearthed far more than anyone expected—the body and belongings of an Iron Age Celtic prince.

For more than two and a half millennia the tomb lay forgotten and undisturbed in the quiet French countryside near Lavau—a small village about a hundred miles southeast of Paris. Then the land was designated for a new shopping mall. When an archaeological team moved in to make a preliminary site inspection, their interest was piqued by a 150-foot hill—about the right size and shape for an ancient funerary mound. Their best hopes were confirmed when inside they unearthed a large fifth-century B.C. tomb. It seems to have belonged to an important Celtic prince, who was buried next to his chariot and with his sword by his side. The chamber contained many luxury items, such as basins, a bucket, finely decorated ceramics, and a sheathed knife.

The most impressive find was a piece considered by archaeologists to be truly exceptional: An enormous bronze cauldron, measuring over three feet in diameter and incredibly well preserved. It is decorated with wolf heads and the face of Achelous, a Greek river god, who is shown with horns, a beard, bull's ears, and a triple mustache. The cauldron's design is believed to indicate either Etruscan or Greek origin and was probably used to mix wine with spices before it was diluted for drinking. This is corroborated by the fact that inside

DENIS GLEKSMAN, INRAP

A GREAT BRONZE CAULDRON is carefully excavated by one of the archeologists at the Lavau site. It contained the Greek vase (far left) which was probably used for holding wine that would be mixed with spices in the cauldron. The Greek god Achelous (below) was one of the exquisite details that decorated this piece.



DENIS GLEKSMAN, INRAP

THE TREASURES OF A CELTIC PRINCE

IN 1977 A ROYAL TOMB was discovered by an amateur archaeologist in Hochdorf, near Stuttgart. It dated from around 530 B.C., what historians call the Hallstatt period. Remarkably, the burial site was found both undisturbed and in an exceptional state of conservation—wood, leather, and even cloth were recovered. The body of a man, about 40 years old and more than six feet tall, had been buried there. It is believed that he must have been a prince or chieftain because he was buried with objects made of gold, rich clothing, and a bronze cauldron quite similar to the ones that have since been found in Lavau.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE HOCHDORF TOMB. THE CELTIC PRINCE LIES ON HIS FUNEREAL BED WITH A GREAT BRONZE CAULDRON AT HIS FEET. OPPOSITE HIM WAS A CART CONTAINING HIS GRAVE GOODS SUCH AS WEAPONS AND DRINKING BOWLS.

ILLUSTRATION: LLOYD K. TOWNSEND JR./NGS

the cauldron archaeologists found an *oenochoe*, a Greek-style vase featuring a representation of Dionysus, the Greek god of wine. According to Dominique García, director of the French National Archaeological Research Institute, these finds provide evidence of remarkable cultural and commercial exchange between the Celts and Mediterranean countries.

The tomb contained other Greek artifacts associated with banqueting rituals, including a gold and silver spoon used to filter wine. This suggests that Celtic aristocracy had adopted banqueting practices common in the ancient Greek world.

A Unique Find

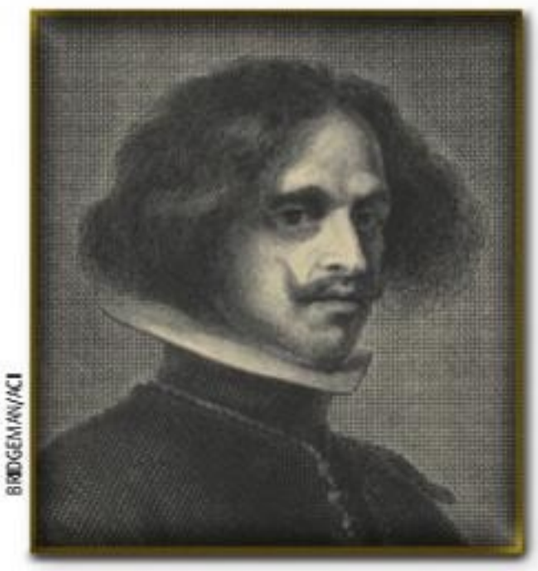
Next to the great mound a smaller and older tomb was unearthed. It contained the skeleton of a woman who archaeologists believe may have family connections to the Celtic prince.

The exceptional type and quality of the grave goods found in Lavau make it one of the most important Celtic discoveries from the early Iron Age (800-500 B.C.). It is better preserved than the celebrated tomb of Vix, found near Dijon, France, and that of Hochdorf, found near Stuttgart, Germany. Studies are ongoing and are expected to shed new light on the Celtic royalty of the period.

"Las Meninas": The Artist and the Royals

Velázquez's acclaimed painting not only reflected courtly life and the artist's place in it, but also the role of art in society as a whole.

Diego Velázquez painted his large canvas "The Royal Family" between 1655 and 1656. For over 150 years it was largely hidden from public view, hung in the king's rooms in the palace of the Alcázar in Seville, damaged in a fire, and then moved to the royal palace of Madrid. Then in 1819 this masterpiece was incorporated into the collection of Spain's new national art museum. In 1843 it received the name under which it has been known ever since: "Las Meninas," or "The Maids of Honor." It has since become one of the most appreciated and studied works in Western art.



BRIDGEMAN/ACI

DIEGO VELÁZQUEZ, IN A SELF-PORTRAIT PAINTED IN 1643

Velázquez had become the court painter to King Philip of Spain in 1623. He had a studio in the palace, and this painting gives us a glimpse into the world in which he worked. In the center stands the infanta Margarita, Philip's daughter, attended by two maids of honor, the *meninas* of the title. In 1656 Margarita was Philip's only child, so she is very much the focus of the painting. A year later her brother, Felipe Próspero, was born and immediately became heir to the throne. He would certainly have altered the composition of the painting.

Of the two maids, Isabel de Velasco is on the right, poised to curtsy, and María Agustina de Sarmiento is on the left, holding a red cup on a golden tray. There are also two dwarfs, the German María Barbola and the Italian Nicolás Pertusato who is playfully treading on a large dog. In the background is the princess's chaperone dressed in mourning and talking to

AKG/ALBUM

THE SPANISH COURT

"LAS MENINAS" contains many details that enrich its meaning, especially as it falls unusually between being a portrait of a princess and a self-portrait of the artist. Its quality and its complexity have led it to be regularly reinterpreted by academics and artists, including Pablo Picasso.

1 ***Order of Santiago***

In 1658 Velázquez sought to become a knight of the Order of Santiago, a title that he received thanks to the king's support. He then added the emblem of the order to his self-portrait.

2 ***The Infanta***

As court artist Velázquez undertook many portraits of Margarita. One, painted the same year as "Las Meninas," shows the princess wearing the same clothes but in a different pose.

3 ***The Mirror***

The mirror that seems to be reflecting the royal couple is one of the work's most debated details. Are they spectators of the masterpiece or reflections from the hidden canvas?

MENINA
was the name given to noble ladies who at a young age became maids of honor at the royal court.

a bodyguard. Through the partially open door we can see the figure of José Nieto Velázquez, the queen's chamberlain and possibly a relative of the artist. Hanging on the wall behind the infanta is a mirror in which we can see the king and the queen. Finally, on the far left, is the artist himself, working on a canvas that dominates a disproportionately large area of the composition.

One of the most enduring questions posed by this work is the unknown subject Velázquez is painting. Suggestions that it is the royal couple as seen in the mirror don't seem to match the size of the canvas he's working on.

Since the late 18th century "Las Meninas" has been extensively studied and widely praised by art historians. It is often interpreted as a defense of the very art of painting. Velázquez painted himself at work and included artworks in the background. Significantly, these are copies of paintings by Peter Paul Rubens and Jacob Jordaens depicting episodes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which mediocre artists are punished. This seems to imply that painting is a noble art and that it should be exalted.

The presence of the painter, with his palette, and wearing the cross of the knightly Order of Santiago, highlights the debate about the status of painting among the liberal arts and, by extension, that of the artist within society.

We don't know the details of why the painting was commissioned, or by whom, even if it's a safe guess that it was someone in the royal household. However, its significance has survived far beyond the 17th-century royal circles for which it was intended. As art historian Daniel Arasse says, "The passage of time doesn't exhaust "Las Meninas," it enriches them." —*Tania Lévy*

La Malinche: The Key That Unlocked Mexico

When Cortés and 500 conquistadores took on the Aztec armies, they fought with more than steel: They had a woman whose words helped tear the empire apart and win allies to fight for Spain.

Princess, slave, lover, wife, traitor

1519

The Maya chief of Potonchán gives 20 young women to Hernán Cortés. Malinalli, christened Doña Marina, is one of them.

1521

As an interpreter and guide to native politics, geography, and culture, Marina plays a decisive role in the Spanish conquest of Mexico.

1524

Cortés, as promised, grants Marina her freedom and marries her to the Spaniard nobleman and official Juan Jaramillo.

ca 1527

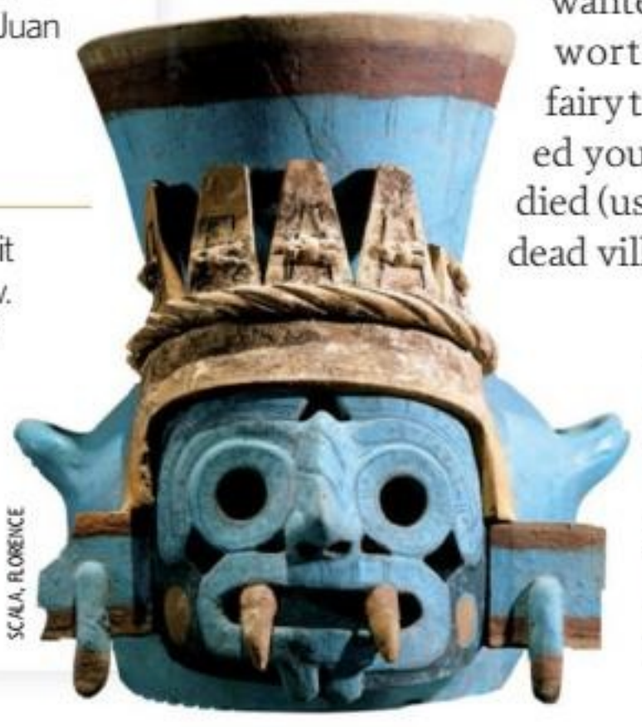
Marina dies, although it is unclear when or how. Smallpox, the rigors of childbirth, and even murder have all been suggested.

In March 1519 Hernán Cortés had little notion of the extraordinary campaign of conquest he was about to launch against the mighty Aztec Empire. He had landed on the Tabasco coast, Maya lands, and had just won a crucial battle at Cintla. The local Maya lord visited the Spanish camp one morning and showered Cortés with lavish gifts of gold, blankets, and food. He also brought him 20 young women. Nobody could have guessed that one of these, Malinalli, would prove worth her weight in gold as Cortés pitched into a life-and-death struggle to conquer Aztec Mexico.

Malinalli was born around 1500, possibly near the former Olmec capital of Coatzacoalcos in the southeast of the Aztec Empire, near modern-day Veracruz. Her father was the chief of Painala, and as a noble-born child she was looking forward to a promising future. That changed dramatically when her father died and her mother remarried a local lord. The couple had a son, whom they made their universal heir: little Malinalli was no longer wanted. In a deception worthy of a Grimm fairy tale they pretended young Malinalli had died (using the body of a dead village girl) and under cover of darkness bundled their daughter into the hands of traveling merchants. These merchants, in turn, sold her as a slave to Maya traders who sold her to the Lord of Potonchán. It was he who made a gift of Malinalli to Hernán Cortés.

This gifting of women was not unusual in contemporary Maya custom. Men tended to travel with women, who would cook and care for them. When the Maya saw the Spaniards had no women, they provided young domestic servants. It was likely that these would also become concubines, so Cortés ordered all the women to be baptized. This was perhaps less for the saving of their souls as it was to satisfy a Castilian law that decreed only unmarried Christians could share the bed of a baptized man. And so, the following day, Malinalli stood before a makeshift altar dominated by a statue of Mary and a cross, while a friar "named the Indian lady they gave us Doña Marina." Cortés then divided the "first Christians" among his captains. Doña Marina was given to an associate of Cortés, Alonso Hernández Portocarrero.

Cortés sailed to San Juan de Ulúa, close to Veracruz. He arrived on Good Friday, and as they set up camp, ambassadors arrived from Moctezuma II, the Aztec emperor. Cortés brought forward



SCALA, FLORENCE

TLALOC, THE AZTEC GOD OF RAIN AND FERTILITY AS A 15TH-CENTURY CENSER

Malinalli spoke both Mayan and the Aztec language, Nahuatl, making her invaluable to Cortés.

MALINALLI'S FIRST meeting with Hernán Cortés, as fancifully depicted in the 16th-century Duran Codex.

ORONOZ/ALBUM

Jerónimo de Aguilar to translate. Aguilar had been shipwrecked off the Yucatán Peninsula, where he had learned the Maya language. But the Aztec spoke Nahuatl. Though Aguilar was unable to understand the Aztec, it became apparent that Marina could. Nahuatl was her native tongue, and she also spoke Maya, the language of her Potonchán masters. According to a chronicle, "Cortés spoke to Aguilar, Aguilar spoke to the Indian woman, and the Indian woman spoke to the Indians."

This process, though cumbersome, made communication possible and would play a decisive role in Cortés's success. It allowed him to talk to natives and question them about their political situation and allegiances, assessing their fears, hopes, strengths, and weaknesses. A master politician, Cortés used this knowledge, and his own persuasive words, to exploit tensions within the empire and win allies to fight Moctezuma.

An Ally and a Lover

Marina's position changed immediately. Cortés told her "if she was a faithful interpreter, he would do her great kindness, marry her, and grant her freedom." While a chronicle describes the 19-year-old Marina as being as "beautiful as a goddess," contemporary sketches of her reveal little of this. However, Cortés wasted no time in making Marina his lover. Perhaps to make matters easier, Cortés ordered Portocarrero back to Spain, bearing a letter to the king.

From now on Hernán Cortés and Doña Marina worked very closely together, so closely in fact that according to fellow

SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LAS CASAS CATHEDRAL was built in the second half of the 17th century. The city was founded by Diego de Mazariegos in 1528.

MEL LONGHURST/AGE FOTOSTOCK

conquistador Bernal Díaz, they shared a nickname. "They called Cortés Marina's captain, or Malinche for short." Marina's skill with languages and her local knowledge often proved crucial. In the town of Cholula she saved the Spaniards from certain death when she exposed an Indian plot she had heard of from a local woman. In the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan she made it possible for Moctezuma and Cortés to talk with each other. Marina translated the Spaniard's complex explanations about Christianity and his insistence that the Indians were rightfully vassals of the Spanish king Charles V.

During the Night of Sorrows, a desperate and bloody scramble to escape Tenochtitlan, Doña Marina was in the rear guard, harassed by Aztec warriors. Reaching safety, Cortés was anxious to discover the fate of his interpreters, and "He was delighted to hear they had lost neither Jerónimo de Aguilar nor Marina." In the final campaign to take Tenochtitlan, Marina's help was decisive in persuading native leaders to join the powerful Spanish-Indian alliance with which Cortés crushed the Aztec army. In victory, Marina announced the Spaniards' harsh demands: "You must present us with two hundred pieces of gold of this size," she told the Aztec, as Cortés described a large circle with his hands.

Doña Marina Must Go

Having defeated the Aztec, Cortés settled in nearby Coyoacán. Marina stayed with

TRUE LOVE OR JUST A LOVER?

THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP between Cortés and Marina is much debated. Chronicles say she was just one of Cortés's many lovers, and that he felt no special affection toward her. Others argue that there was definitely a romantic bond. However, there is no basis for the accusation that Cortés murdered his lover in 1529.

AZTEC GOLD EARRINGS WITH ANIMAL MOTIFS, MADE IN THE 16TH CENTURY

AKG/ALBUM

DOÑA MARINA, THE TRAITOR

LA MALINCHE in some countries has come to mean "a person who commits treason." This is based on the widely held belief that Malinalli betrayed her own people in siding with a foreigner. However, in 1519 Mexico was not a unified nation but a land of diverse peoples often at odds with each other and resentful of Aztec rule.

DOÑA MARINA, LA MALINCHE, IN A MEXICAN ENGRAVING FROM 1885.

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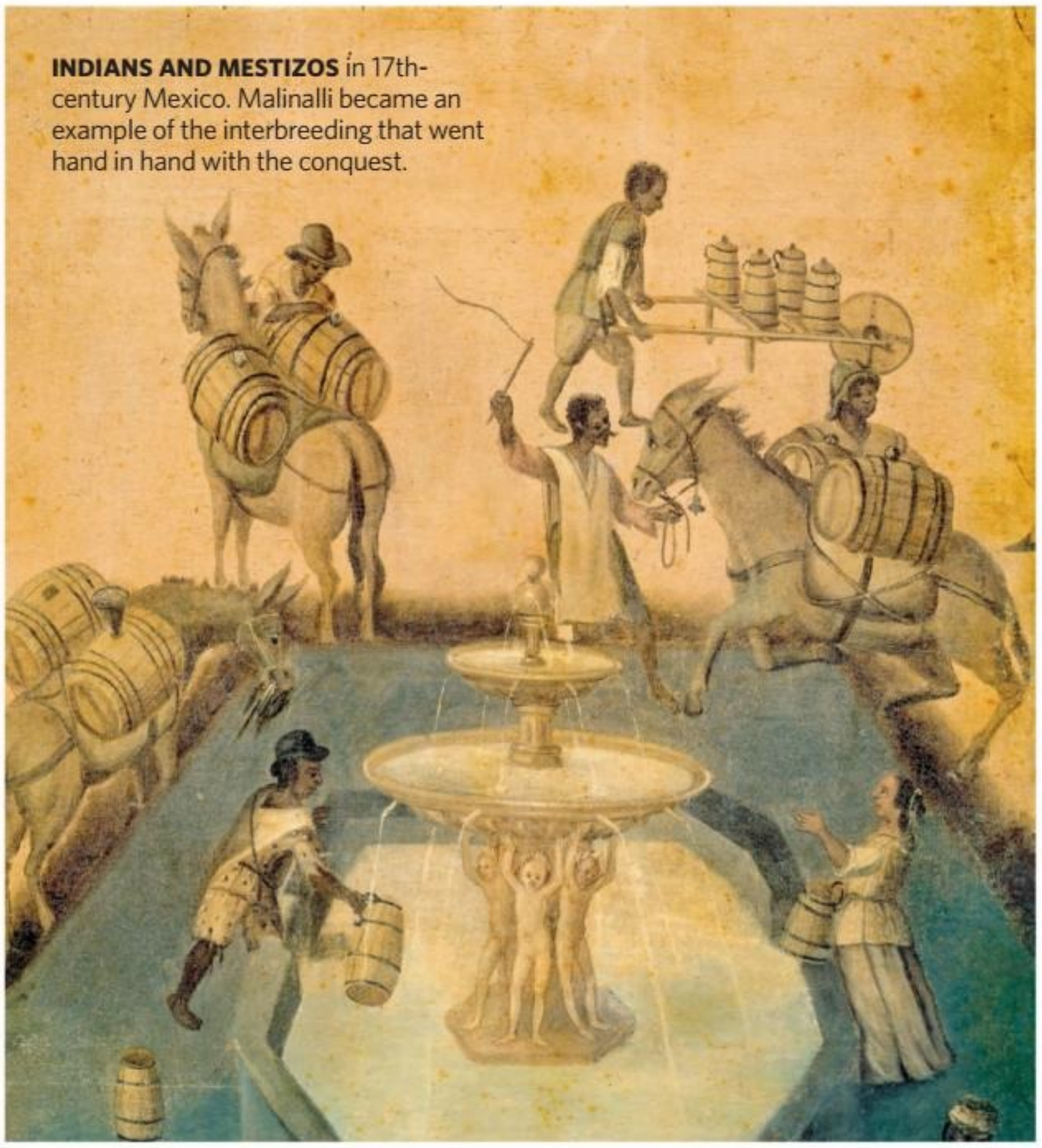

INDIANS AND MESTIZOS in 17th-century Mexico. Malinalli became an example of the interbreeding that went hand in hand with the conquest.

ORONOZ/ALBUM

him, and in 1522 they had a son, named Martín in honor of the conquistador's father. However, the arrival of Cortés's wife, from Cuba, meant it was time to find his concubine a new home and a husband.

In 1524 Cortés was obliged to travel to Honduras to crush a Spanish revolt. While undertaking this mission he arranged Marina's marriage to a Spanish nobleman called Juan Jaramillo, an official in Mexico City who became its mayor two years later.

The chronicler López de Gómara said that Jaramillo was drunk on his wedding day and that many frowned upon the union, as Marina was an Indian single mother who had already had two Spanish lovers. However the marriage gave Marina high social standing and fulfilled Cortés's promise to free her.

For her services Marina was also assigned estates in her native province. On passing through her hometown, Cortés summoned local leaders, including Marina's mother and half brother, and had them all christened. He then told them that they now owed their fealty to Marina. The chronicle records that "they were frightened of her because they thought they were going to be killed." Instead Marina consoled them, forgave them, and "gave them much gold, jewelry, and clothes."

The Legacy of La Malinche

After this expedition Cortés and his young interpreter went their separate ways. On the return journey from Honduras Marina gave birth to a girl she named María. She settled with her husband and daughter in Mexico City, although she was not allowed to keep her son, Martín, raised by his conquistador father, who later took him back to Spain. Marina then all but disappears. She died sometime before 1529, perhaps of the smallpox that ravaged the natives soon after the Europeans arrived, perhaps of the exertions of the long journey from Honduras while pregnant. Whenever and however her end came, she left a lasting legacy. It was her knowledge of the local languages, geography, and politics that made the conquest of Mexico far quicker and less bloody than Cortés had any right to hope for. Doña Marina was the "key that opened Mexico."

—Isabel Bueno

Learn more

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Sandra M. Cypess, University of Texas Press, 1991.

La Malinche
Jane Eppinga, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012.

Pets for Life—and the Afterlife

The Egyptians had deep respect for birds and beasts—their gods were often given animal form. But domestic pets, especially dogs, cats, and monkeys, were so valued that they could grow to expect a life of relative luxury that even extended beyond the grave.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

When the Greek historian Herodotus visited Egypt in the middle of the fifth century B.C., he recorded a common ritual for mourning the dead—shaving the eyebrows. This mark of respect, however, was not for a dead child, spouse, or parent, but for a pet. Herodotus notes the abundance of household pets in Egypt and the particular affection they aroused. He went on to report that in homes where a dog had died, the people "shave their whole body and also their head."

This fondness for animals dates back at least to the Old Kingdom (2686–2173 B.C.), when Egyptians had regularly painted pictures of their pets on the walls of tombs or inscribed their names on funerary stelae and sarcophagi. In ancient Egypt magical powers were attributed to images, so by creating statues, reliefs, and paintings, owners were more than commemorating their pets: They were ensuring that they would accompany them into the afterlife.

These images not only highlight the important role pets played in daily life, but they also tell us a great deal about the pets themselves. It has been possible to identify the specific breeds of animals that lived along the Nile, the extent to which they were domesticated, and even the veterinary practices with which they were treated. These studies clearly show that three species of pet were particularly popular in ancient Egypt: dogs, cats, and monkeys.

Man's Best Friend

For the Egyptians, dogs were loyal companions as much in the domestic calm of the home as in the bloody frenzy of the hunt. Egyptian artists painted dogs on the most elegant tombs, and they portrayed a wide array of breeds with great attention to detail. Some had coats of one color; others were patched. Some had big, floppy ears; others were pointed and straight. There were house dogs, sheepdogs, guard dogs, and hunting dogs—known in Egyptian as *tesem,* and easily identified by their long snouts, thin legs, and curly tails. In some desert hunt scenes these dogs are shown running alongside archers, giving chase to lions and antelopes.

ALBUM

A MONKEY IN THE HOUSE

MONKEYS AND BABOONS were kept as pets by many ancient Egyptians, even though by the Middle Kingdom they probably had to be imported from Nubia. They also carried significant religious symbolism: Because baboons were seen to bark at the rising sun, Egyptians believed that they were paying homage to the sun god Ra.

A STATUE OF THE GOD THOTH, IN THE FORM OF A BABOON, CROWNED WITH A SOLAR DISK

CATS FEATURED in many areas of Egyptian life, including religion. In this 1878 painting by Edwin Long we can see a sculptor make a statue representing Bastet, the cat goddess.

Domesticated dogs enjoyed free run of the home, eating and sleeping with their doting masters. Images have been found of dogs sporting ornate collars, their leashes held by proud owners. Curiously, however, no image has been found of adult Egyptians stroking their pets, grooming them, or even playing with them.

Cats and Monkeys

Cats, or *miu*, were domesticated from the time of the Middle Kingdom (from 2040 B.C.). They were prized as efficient hunters, killing rats, mice, snakes, and other pests found in the houses and barns of Egypt. This vital

Egyptians, the First Veterinarians

A SICK COW, a bull with a cold, and a dog with an ulcer. Fractures, neutering, preventive treatment with hot and cold baths, massage lotions, cauterization—all of this is detailed in the Kahun papyri, considered the very first treatise on veterinary science. This remarkable document is one of a collection of papyri that includes gynecological instruction as well as hymns and business documents. They were discovered by the archaeologist Flinders Petrie in the El Faiyum region of Egypt at the close of the 19th century. Written in priestly script, the Kahun collection has been dated to the Middle Kingdom, around 1800 B.C. Some papyri were in very poor condition; fragments had to be painstakingly restored before being translated by the eminent British Egyptologist Francis Llewellyn Griffith.

A DOG'S (ETERNAL) LIFE

MANY OWNERS added the names of their dogs to their funerary stelae. We know the names of around 80 ancient Egyptian dogs, including: He's a Shepherd, Good Watchdog, and Barker. A 6th-dynasty (2345-2173 B.C.) inscription tells of the king's love for his dog named Abutiu, or Pointed Ears: "His majesty ordered that he was buried with ceremony, that he be granted a coffin from the Royal Treasury, fine linen and incense. He did this in honor of his dog."

EGYPTIAN DOG COLLAR, POSSIBLY FROM AROUND THE TIME OF TUTANKHAMUN

CORDON PRESS

A MAN WATERS HIS GARDEN accompanied by his loyal dog in this painting from a 19th-dynasty tomb at Deir el Medina.

AGE FOTOSTOCK

service won cats great affection, and they soon became an integral part of the household. Cats allowed their owners to collar them or tie eye-catching ribbons around their necks. They dozed beneath the chairs of their feasting masters.

From the time of the New Kingdom (1552 B.C.) it was increasingly common to see cats represented on the walls of tombs. Judging by the images, felines had become the favorite pet of members of the royal family, such as Queen Tiye, Princess Sitamun, and Prince Thutmose. The great pharaoh Amenhotep III commissioned a magnificent stone sarcophagus with splendid reliefs and inscriptions for his own beloved cat, Tamit.

By the time of the Old Kingdom monkeys *(ky)* and baboons *(ian)* were well established as household pets. In tombs they are depicted climbing palms and fig trees to help collect the highest fruits.

They also appear under their owners' tables, often adorned with collars and bangles. Living alongside dogs, cats, and other animals, they were given free rein around the house and often amused the family with their gestures, acrobatics, and antics: Watching them was considered a particularly pleasant way to pass the time at home.

Studying the remains of domesticated baboons has revealed that their viciously sharp canine teeth were often removed, probably to reduce the risk of a serious bite. Such an operation would have been painful for the baboon and difficult for the specialist carrying it out, leading to speculation that some form of anesthetic may have been used. It's a reminder that monkeys have an aggressive streak, indeed some scenes of public gatherings show monkeys on leashes patrolling alongside the *medjay,* an ancient Egyptian police force.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Hunting dogs were used to help catch lions and antelopes.

TUTANKHAMUN SHOWN HUNTING ACCOMPANIED BY HIS DOG

Life after Death

Pets enjoyed a relatively high level of care and a great deal of grooming. The study of the remains of ancient

Pets Preserved for All Time

THE MANY MUMMIFIED ANIMALS found in Egypt have revealed the different roles they played in society. In addition to mummifying pets, especially cats and dogs, Egyptians embalmed animals such as fish and ducks to provide sustenance to the deceased in the afterlife. Crocodiles and ibises were mummified and used as religious offerings.

1 *Cat*
Cats became especially fashionable as pets during the Greco-Roman period, from around the fourth century B.C.

2 *Fish*
Mummified fish have been found in many tombs. They were food for the dead on the journey to the afterlife.

3 *Mongoose*
A noted hunter of snakes, the mongoose was associated with the sun god Ra, who fought the giant snake Apophis.

4 *Dog*
Companions both at home and on the hunt, dogs had been buried with their owners since the predynastic period.

5 *Crocodile*
Mummified animals were often given to the gods. Crocodiles were offered to Sobek in his temple at El Faiyum.

1. SCALA, FLORENCE 2. LOUVRE MUSEUM/ALBUM 3. AKG/ALBUM 4. CORBIS/CORDON PRESS 5. EGYPTIAN MUSEUM, CAIRO/CORBIS/CORDON PRESS

Egyptian pets confirms this. Most have the glossy fur and strong bones suggestive of a steady, balanced diet. The affection this implies extended beyond life and into death, as household animals were considered worthy companions for the grave. Besides being mourned, they were mummified in a complex, time-consuming, and costly procedure.

The animal's body was placed on a special embalming table and its innards removed through an incision in its side. Dissolving agents might also be injected through the animal's anus, quickly destroying its internal organs. Anything extracted was cleaned, steeped in aromatic substances, and then replaced in the abdominal cavity. By this stage, the animal's body would have been dried with natron, a type of salt, and filled with myrrh, cinnamon, and other expensive products.

Resin-based unguents and various perfumed oils were applied before the body was tightly wrapped with linen bandages. The embalmed pet would then be placed in its own coffin or sarcophagus and, when the time came, buried near its owners. The great expense and effort incurred in the process suggests the emotional value owners attached to their pets.

A Gazelle for a Princess

One of the finest and most delicate of all mummified pets discovered is that of a gazelle. Historians believe that it belonged to the family of Pharaoh Pinedjem II, who died around 969 B.C.—probably to his sister-wife, Queen Isitemkheb D.

Analysis of this animal shows it to have been a four-year-old female that died of natural causes. The gazelle's body, still wearing several collars, was wrapped in linen bandages and placed in a sarcophagus carved out of sycamore and beautifully shaped to show the animal's outline.

Some Egyptians took this custom even further and had the mummified corpse of their favorite pets placed directly in their own sarcophagi. Carefully mummified dogs have been found curled up at the feet of their dead owners. Perhaps pet and master had slept like this in life, and it was comforting to the owner to believe that they would continue the custom as they shared the long journey beyond the grave.

—Juan José Sánchez Arreseigor

Learn more

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The Cat in Ancient Egypt
Jaromir Malek, British Museum Press, 2006.
Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt
Salima Ikram, American University in Cairo Press, 2005.

From Asia to America: Conquering the Pacific

In the 16th century the world's most profitable trade routes started or finished in the exotic East. But while sailing from the New World to Asia was relatively easy, finding a fast, safe, and direct return route back across the Pacific eluded all best efforts until a seafaring friar took up the challenge.

The expedition that set out in 1519 under Ferdinand Magellan completed the first circumnavigation of the globe in 1522. This feat opened up the East Asian seas to adventurers from the maritime nations of Europe, prompting sailors to set out to explore and exploit archipelagos such as the Moluccas, the Philippines, and Japan. Spain and Portugal had already carved up the new territories in the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), with the East Asian seas falling under Portuguese influence. However, there were sufficient doubts about the exact position of the treaty's dividing line to encourage Spanish exploration of the area in the hope of challenging Portugal's monopoly of the lucrative spice trade with Asia. To gain a foothold in the region Spain sent expeditions from the west coast of Mexico, taking a relatively fast and safe route across the Pacific Ocean. However, the return journey was a much more difficult and dangerous proposition. Contrary currents and winds made it impossible to sail back to Mexico along the outward route. Various attempts were made in the first half of the 16th century—all failed. Cut off from their American colonies, Spanish ships had to continue westward to return to Spain itself. This was a long and hazardous journey around India and then Africa. It entailed rounding the notorious Cape of Good Hope, then skirting the African coastline northward to Europe.

MIGHTY GALLEONS in a 16th-century painting. With their low prows and high sterns, Spain's battleship of choice clashed with Europe's other powers in the race to rule the waves.

PRISMA ARCHIVO

ANDRÉS DE URDANETA, EXPLORER AND SAILOR, SHOWN IN HIS AUGUSTINIAN FRIAR'S HABIT IN THIS 1890 PORTRAIT BY VÍCTOR VILLÁN DE AZA.

ORONOZ/ALBUM

SAILING THE GREAT SOUTH SEA

IN 1513 VASCO NÚÑEZ DE BALBOA was the first European to reach the Pacific Ocean from the New World. He called it the South Sea, as the water seemed to stretch from the coast of Panama far off to the south. It was Ferdinand Magellan who later named it the Pacific because of the calm weather he experienced for the three months and 20 days of his crossing from Tierra del Fuego to the Mariana Islands in 1520-1521.

A Friar Adventurer

By the 1550s Spain was increasingly anxious to find a faster return route from Asia to the Americas. On a short list of options one man stood out as being capable of achieving this feat: Andrés de Urdaneta. Born in northern Spain, Urdaneta was a leading authority on ocean navigation. At 17 he had sailed with one of the many expeditions that failed to find a return route, and he had then spent almost a decade in East Asia. He used this time well, earning a reputation as a skilled leader with a spirit of adventure. Urdaneta studied indigenous languages, native navigation techniques, and the local weather. As attempt after attempt to recross the Pacific met with failure, he recognized the need to find a new route to Mexico.

Urdaneta returned to Europe in 1536. Two years later he traveled back to the Americas, where he worked in various government jobs. Following a spiritual crisis in 1553 he became an Augustinian friar, but the religious life did little to quell his adventurous streak or his desire to return to the Far East. In 1559 King Philip II of Spain backed an expedition across the Pacific. The viceroy of Mexico recruited Urdaneta to take part in the fateful voyage.

AKG/ALBUM

The route that Urdaneta discovered brought Chinese silk and porcelain to Mexico and from there to Spain.

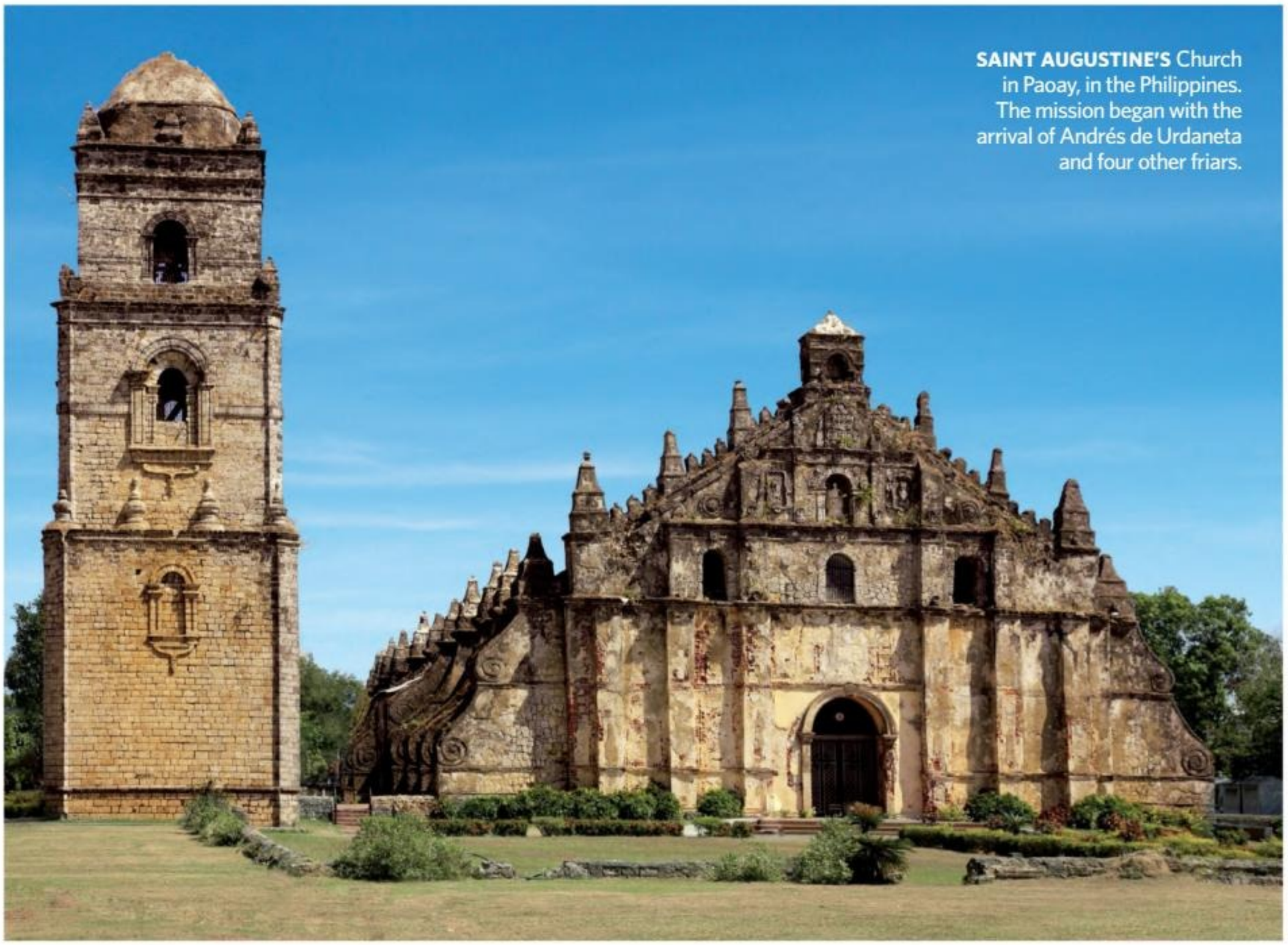
CHINESE PORCELAIN VASE DATED TO THE MING DYNASTY (1368-1644)

The Voyage to the Philippines

Over the next five years a fleet was built to Urdaneta's specifications. The work was carried out in great secrecy so as not to alert the Portuguese. Miguel López de Legazpi commanded the expedition with Urdaneta in charge of navigation.

On November 21, 1564, a fleet of four ships and 380 men set sail from the west coast Mexican port of Navidad. Five days out to sea Legazpi opened the king's sealed orders; they commanded him to make for the Philippines, claim them, conquer them, and then attempt to find a return route to Mexico.

Urdaneta felt tricked. He believed the Philippines rightfully belonged to the Portuguese and had moral qualms about participating in a mission in which Spain would conquer the archipelago. Nevertheless, he was passionate about finding the elusive route, and Philip II's orders relating to it were unequivocal: "The main goal of this voyage is to find the return



SAINT AUGUSTINE'S Church in Paoay, in the Philippines. The mission began with the arrival of Andrés de Urdaneta and four other friars.

JANEK/AGE FOTOSTOCK

route, as we know the outward voyage takes very little time."

On January 21, 1565, Urdaneta announced their imminent arrival at what are now the Mariana Islands, the eastern limit of the Philippine Sea. The very next morning they sighted land. This demonstration of navigational skill silenced the taunts of some who were convinced that the fleet had already overshot the Philippines. The islands were reached on February 13, 1565. The expedition had covered 7,623 miles.

Once established in the archipelago, Legazpi founded the first Spanish settlement on the island of Cebu. Urdaneta immediately began planning the return voyage. He spent four months fitting out a single ship, the *San Pedro,* and choosing the 200 men who would sail with him. A portion of the crew were men he already knew from his home region of Guipúzcoa; the captain was Felipe Salcedo, who, although only 18 years old, had proven his leadership, loyalty, and maturity. Urdaneta had full responsibility for navigation, and realizing it would be a long and uncertain voyage, he loaded provisions to last for up to nine months. The *San Pedro* set sail from Cebu on June 1, 1565, stopping at one last islet to fill the decks with coconuts before setting out into the seemingly endless and empty Pacific Ocean.

Land ho!

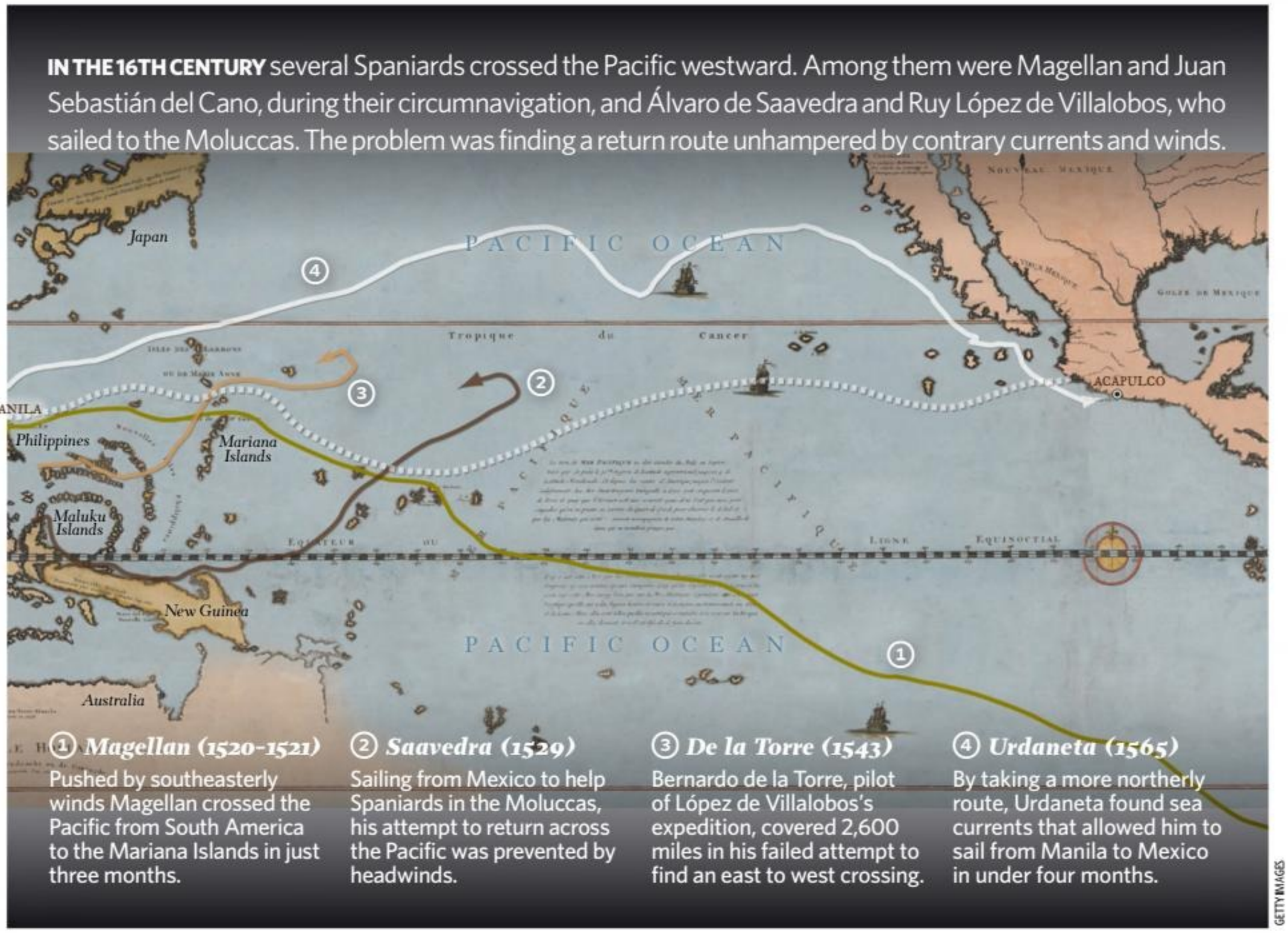
The *San Pedro*'s log for June 9 stated that they had reached "the end of the Philippine Islands." The ship then sailed northeast aided by the summer monsoon. On

ART ARCHIVE

CONQUERING THE PHILIPPINES

PHILIP II needed a base from which to access the wealth of Asia. He ordered Miguel López de Legazpi to conquer the Philippines, which involved battling indigenous groups and Muslim pirates. He founded Manila on Luzon island in 1571, and the annual voyage of the Manila Galleon between Acapulco and the Philippines began two years later.

THE PORT OF ACAPULCO IN AN ENGRAVING FROM *HISTORIA AMERICAE*, 1602


Japan
PACIFIC OCEAN
Tropique du Cancer
ACAPULCO
MANILA
Philippines
Mariana Islands
Maluku Islands
New Guinea
Australia
PACIFIC OCEAN
1 Magellan (1520-1521)
Pushed by southeasterly winds Magellan crossed the Pacific from South America to the Mariana Islands in just three months.
2 Saavedra (1529)
Sailing from Mexico to help Spaniards in the Moluccas, his attempt to return across the Pacific was prevented by headwinds.
3 De la Torre (1543)
Bernardo de la Torre, pilot of López de Villalobos's expedition, covered 2,600 miles in his failed attempt to find an east to west crossing.
4 Urdaneta (1565)
By taking a more northerly route, Urdaneta found sea currents that allowed him to sail from Manila to Mexico in under four months.

IN THE 16TH CENTURY several Spaniards crossed the Pacific westward. Among them were Magellan and Juan Sebastián del Cano, during their circumnavigation, and Álvaro de Saavedra and Ruy López de Villalobos, who sailed to the Moluccas. The problem was finding a return route unhampered by contrary currents and winds.

GETTY IMAGES

June 21 they spotted a low rocky outcrop, keeping a safe distance to avoid running aground. This sail-shaped atoll was Okino-tori at latitude 20° N. It would be the last land they saw until reaching the Americas.

Urdaneta's plan was to reach a latitude of 39° N, where, according to his calculations and knowledge, he believed they would find a favorable sea current to carry them quickly toward the Americas. He was right: The current is now known as the Kuroshio. Even so, Urdaneta twice ordered the ship to change course to 32° and then back to 39°. This prolonged the voyage but was essential to verify their longitude. By now the officers who had once doubted and even laughed at Urdaneta were so astonished by his skills that they gave their full backing to his every order.

Inevitably, on what were long and monotonous voyages, some men fell sick and died, at the time costing the lives of up to half a ship's crew. But Urdaneta's careful preparations paid off. The ship was well stocked with legumes and coconuts, which provided some of the vitamin C needed to prevent scurvy, one of the main causes of death among mariners. Just 10 percent of the *San Pedro*'s crew died during the crossing and none of them from scurvy. In fact, when on September 18 they finally sighted Santa Rosa Island off the Californian coast, Urdaneta did not even need to stop and stock up on provisions or water. On October 8, 1565, the *San Pedro* arrived safely in Mexico, at the port of Acapulco. The four long months of the crossing were behind them. They had done the impossible and finally discovered the return route from Asia to America.

The Manila Galleons

Andrés de Urdaneta's remarkable voyage established an important trade route between the Philippines and Acapulco. It supplied Spain with spices, porcelain, silk, and all manner of exotic goods drawn from India, China, and especially Southeast Asia. In exchange, Spain exported textiles, munitions, and, in particular, precious metals. Once a year passengers and goods set sail from Manila on board Spanish ships known as Manila Galleons. By following the route discovered by Urdaneta, these ships reached Acapulco four or five months later.

Urdaneta's route continued to be used until the late 19th century, when the Suez Canal opened up a direct passage between Spain and Manila that took less than two months. Steamships ended the reliance on the Kuroshio but Urdaneta's discovery remains a milestone in maritime navigation.

—Juan José Sánchez Arreseigor

Learn more

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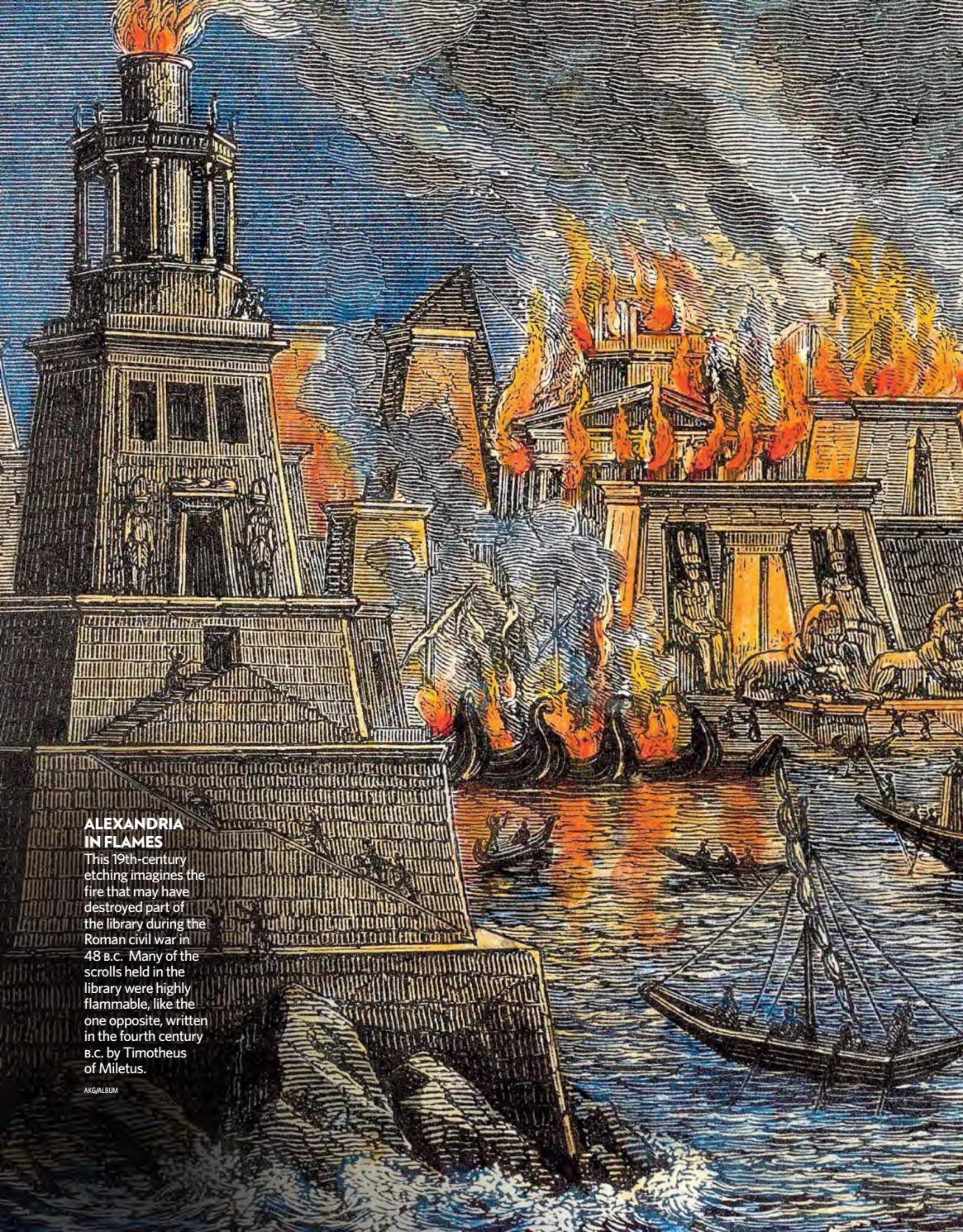
The Manila Galleon
Jason Schoonover, Rolling Thunder Publishing, 2007.



ALEXANDRIA IN FLAMES
This 19th-century etching imagines the fire that may have destroyed part of the library during the Roman civil war in 48 B.C. Many of the scrolls held in the library were highly flammable, like the one opposite, written in the fourth century B.C. by Timotheus of Miletus.

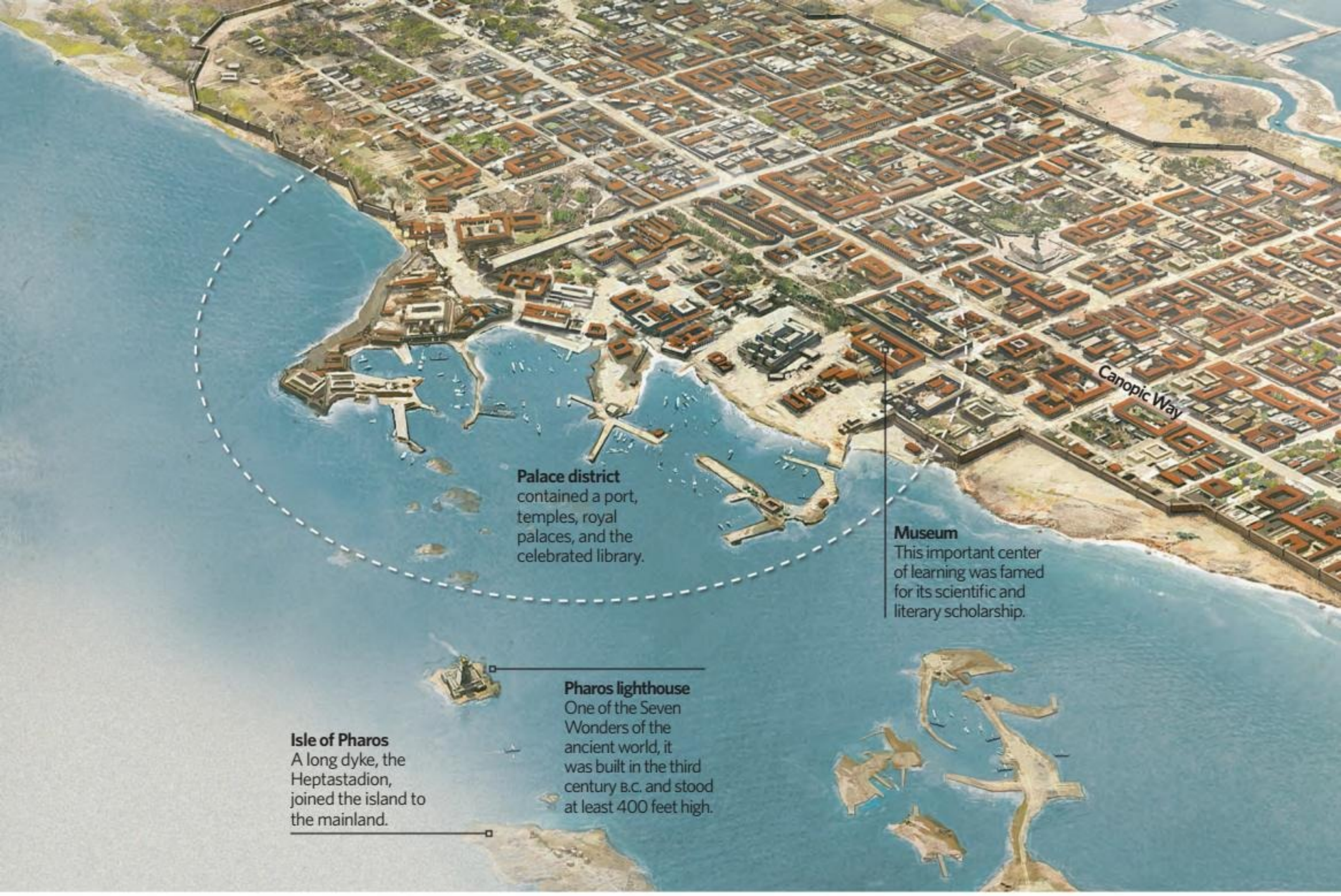
AKG/ALBUM

The Lost Knowledge of the

LIBRARY *of* ALEXANDRIA

The destruction of history's most famous library is a tragedy and an enduring mystery. Were thousands of scrolls lost to an accidental fire? Or were they victims of a more systematic destruction over many years?

BPK/SCALA, FLORENCE


Canopic Way
Palace district
contained a port, temples, royal palaces, and the celebrated library.
Museum
This important center of learning was famed for its scientific and literary scholarship.
Isle of Pharos
A long dyke, the Heptastadion, joined the island to the mainland.
Pharos lighthouse
One of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, it was built in the third century B.C. and stood at least 400 feet high.

Imagine a universal library that assembled all the books ever produced. Stacked on seemingly endless shelves would be every book known to mankind, in every language. Within its walls would be the sum of human knowledge and the answers to almost any question ever asked. In the age of computers we might call this the World Wide Web. In ancient times it was the Library of Alexandria.

In 331 B.C. Alexander the Great founded Alexandria as the new capital of Egypt. Just a few years later the ruling Greek Ptolemaic dynasty established the Museum of Alexandria as a center for scholarly research and learning. Alongside it they founded the Library of Alexandria, with an ambitious and philanthropic purpose: To assemble in one place all the works of knowledge, from every time and place, and to preserve them for future generations.

With patronage from the Ptolemies, the library's collection was painstakingly amassed over many decades. Its librarians included some of the great minds of Greece: Philosopher and statesman Demetrius of Phalerum and poets Callimachus of Cyrene and Apollonius of Rhodes. They were anxious to compile a truly comprehensive collection of knowledge that looked beyond the borders of Greece to include the significant works of non-Hellenist peoples, including examples from Jewish and Egyptian

A FONT OF ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE

320-221 B.C.

The Museum and Library of Alexandria are founded as centers of learning under the patronage of the Ptolemies. The Serapeum was later established as a secondary library.

145 B.C.

After a bloody power struggle Ptolemy VIII ascends to the throne of Egypt. Due to continued instability many scholars flee Alexandria, bringing about a decline in learning.

PTOLEMY II AND ARSINOE ON A GOLD COIN FROM 246 B.C.

Alexandria: A City Designed to Impress

Alexander the Great founded Alexandria in 331 B.C. to be the new capital of Egypt. Its architect, Dinocrates, designed the city in the shape of a chlamys, the traditional Greek cape. Streets followed a grid pattern, with numerous gardens and long, wide avenues, including the Canopic Way, which was the city's main thoroughfare. Among the most famous sites were the lighthouse on the island of Pharos, and the library and museum, both probably in the royal palaces.

Lake Mareotis
This navigable lake was linked by canals to both the Nile River and the Mediterranean Sea.
Canal of Alexandria
Serapeum
This temple dedicated to Serapis held a subsidiary library containing additional books.
Hippodrome
Serapean Way
Heptastadion

FERNANDO G. BAPTISTA/NGS

traditions, and the Zoroastrian hymns of ancient Persia.

By the middle of the third century B.C. the library is said to have held 490,000 books; 200 years later the Roman writer Aulus Gellius claimed that figure had risen to 700,000. These numbers have been questioned and revised. More conservative calculations take a zero off the end of both figures. Even taking a skeptical stance, however, the scale of the ancient collection must have been impressive, and when the library was destroyed a tremendous store of learning was forever lost to the world. We will never know exactly what was lost, but in a great many cases the works that disappeared were certainly irreplaceable, and their absence has left an extraordinary gap in the literary and scientific legacy of the past.

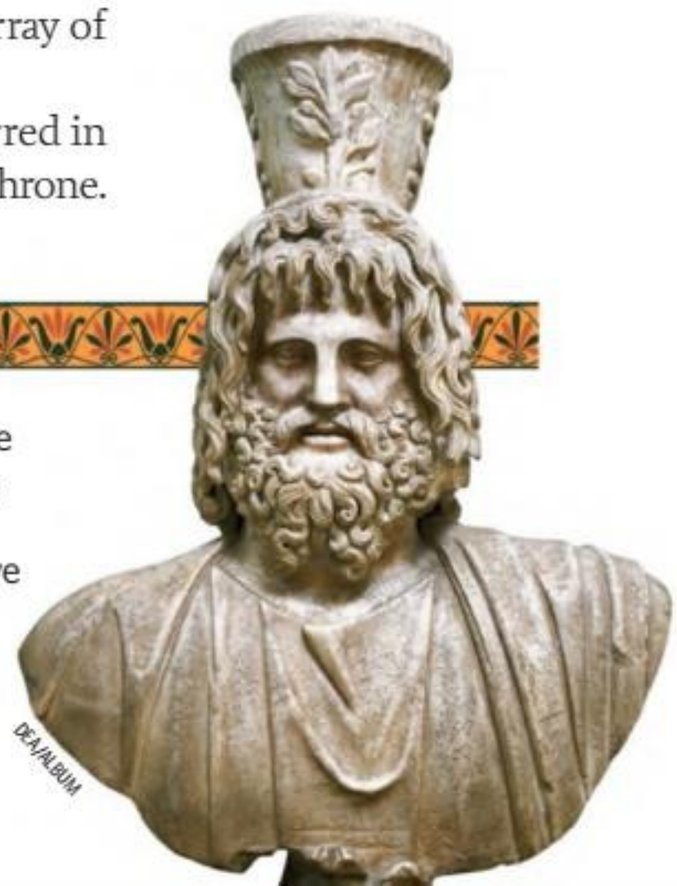
Fire Strikes the First Blow

Trying to pinpoint exactly when the Library of Alexandria was destroyed is a task that has perplexed historians for centuries. In fact there was probably no single dramatic moment; rather, it was a series of events, and so shrouded in obscurity and myth that they must be carefully unraveled through the study of a wide array of ancient sources.

The first catastrophe may have occurred in 48 B.C., during a struggle for the Egyptian throne.

A NEW GOD FOR ALEXANDRIA

To strengthen the bond between Greeks and Egyptians, Ptolemy I created a new god: Serapis. He was a syncretic divinity who combined funerary and fertility ideals.



DEA/ALBUM

48 B.C.

During the Alexandrine War, between Cleopatra VII and her sister Arsinoe IV, part of the library is destroyed in a large fire. The historian Plutarch blames the blaze on Julius Caesar.

A.D. 391-415

Christianity clashes with paganism. The Christian patriarch Theophilus encourages the destruction of the Serapeum and its large library. Later, frenzied Christian mobs riot in the streets.

A.D. 642

Alexandria is conquered by the Arab Muslim armies of Caliph Umar. Arabic sources blame Umar for ordering the definitive destruction of all the books in the Library of Alexandria.

AKG/ALBUM

A WORKING LIBRARY
This 1876 engraving shows scrolls being stored on shelves, but the library was more than a repository for research materials. It was a cultural and intellectual center, with gardens, a dining hall, reading room, lecture hall, and meeting rooms.

A CITY DEVOTED TO LEARNING

THE PRIDE OF THE PTOLEMIES

Historians still debate the exact location and design of the **Library of Alexandria.** Rather than being a separate building, it was probably part of the royal palaces within the fortified Bruchion district. The Letter of Aristeas from the second century B.C. is the first document to mention the library, saying that the collection began with the "royal books" of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (circa 309-246 B.C.). The core collection was either organized during Philadelphus's reign, or during that of his father, Ptolemy I, by the scholar Demetrius of Phalerum. The **Museum,** or Temple of the Muses, was also part of this palace complex; the library may have been housed in one of its wings. A second library, the **Serapeum,** was said to have been founded by Ptolemy III Euergetes, perhaps to handle an ever increasing number of scrolls. The Roman historian Ammianus compared the splendor of the building to the temples on the Capitoline Hill in Rome. The Serapeum was destroyed in the fourth century, but the Library of Alexandria survived until the Arab conquest in the seventh century.

Roman general Julius Caesar was in Alexandria to support the claim of Cleopatra VII against her sister and rival Arsinoe IV. Forces loyal to Arsinoe besieged Caesar in the city's fortified palace, which was almost certainly home to the library. Caesar was already planning to ship some 40,000 scrolls to Rome, but during the battle a fire that started in an arsenal spread to the waterfront warehouses where they were being kept, marking the first major loss for the library. Some sources suggest that the entire library was destroyed as a result of this incident, but this seems unlikely. A few years later Mark Antony—the general, consul, and lover of Queen Cleopatra—is said to have bestowed upon the Library of Alexandria a large number of books from a rival library in Pergamum, perhaps to compensate for those destroyed during Caesar's fire.

> Books from the Library of Pergamum were said to have been transferred to the Library of Alexandria by Mark Antony.

Dust Settles on the Shelves

Cleopatra's suicide in 30 B.C. brought an end to the Ptolemaic dynasty. Rome soon seized formal control of Egypt, and Alexandria was forced to live in the shadow of the mighty imperial capital. Thus began a long and inexorable decline for both Alexandria and its library. And yet its fame was slow to fade. It continued to attract students and brilliant scholars, such as the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus and the Greek geographer Strabo. But without a royal patron to support it and pay for upkeep and the expansion of its collections, the library lost momentum and had to abandon the grand ambitions of totality its founders had aspired to.

Worse was to come. The second century saw the terrible Antonine Plague which devastated Egypt's population. The third century was filled with political strife and conflict, which led to a

ROMAN ODEUM IN ALEXANDRIA

The odeum of Kom el-Dikka is one of the few surviving testimonies to Roman Alexandria. This small theater for oratory and music was sited in the city's academic district.

GONZALO AZUMENDI

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

diversion of resources that bode ill for scholarship. Hit by crisis after crisis, the library struggled to retain relevance.

In 272 the Roman Emperor Aurelian arrived in Alexandria and ravaged the city in his campaign to reassert Roman authority in the east. Just a few years later a revolt in Egypt saw rebel forces in Alexandria under attack from the Roman legions of Emperor Diocletian, further damaging the palace complex and, probably, its precious collections.

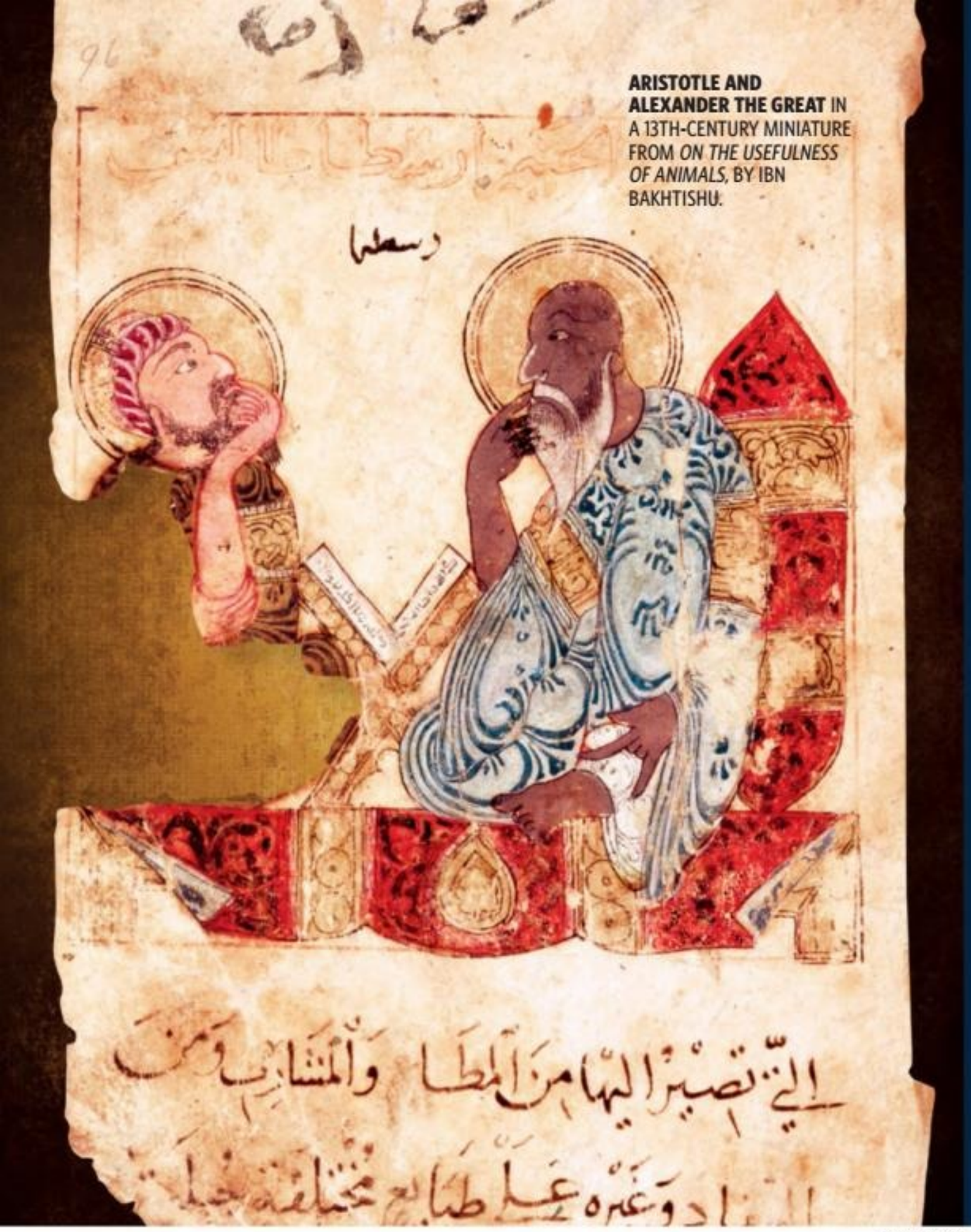
Then in the fourth century things went from bad to worse for the library: Christianity was proclaimed the official religion of the Roman Empire. This had dangerous implications for an institution whose shelves were packed with the collected knowledge of classical paganism, exactly the sort of works that deeply offended some Christian movements. It was also around this time that Egyptian Christians such as Saint Anthony founded monastic communities where the scholarly monks devoted themselves exclusively to prayer and study of the scriptures.

The result was that the Ptolemaic library was of little interest to the followers of the new religion or were actively reviled by them. The laws against paganism enacted by Emperor Theodosius (347-395) were used by more extreme Christians to legitimize attacks against pagan temples and institutions. The Serapeum Library, founded by Ptolemy Euergetes and often confused with the Library of Alexandria, was destroyed in the year 391, during an anti-pagan pogrom instigated by the patriarch Theophilus. In 415 the philosopher and scientist Hypatia of Alexandria, one of the earliest female mathematicians and perhaps the last representative of the Alexandrine philosophy, died at the hands of a mob of Christian monks stirred up by Theophilus's successor, Cyril. The valuable library seemed to vanish with her, for around this time the Iberian theologian Orosius claimed that when he visited the city he did not find a single manuscript in the temple, only empty shelves. It was a

BLAMING CAESAR

19th-century miniature of Julius Caesar, who supported his lover Cleopatra in a dynastic war. During hostilities, a fire destroyed part of the library collection that Caesar had intended to send to Rome.

ERICH LESSING/ALBUM



ARISTOTLE AND ALEXANDER THE GREAT IN A 13TH-CENTURY MINIATURE FROM *ON THE USEFULNESS OF ANIMALS*, BY IBN BAKHTISHU.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

CHRISTIANS AND ARABS

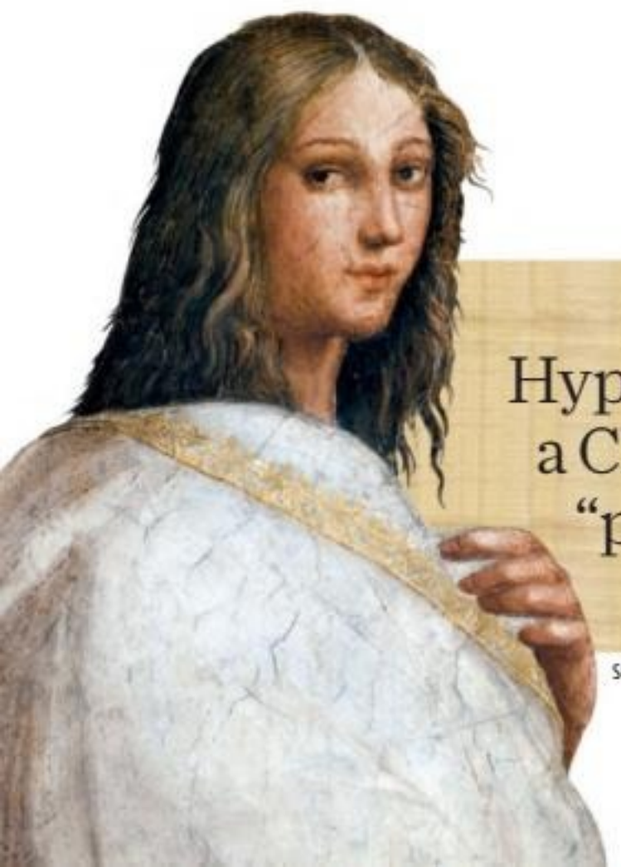
WHO BURNED THE BOOKS?

Edward Gibbon, the acclaimed 18th-century English historian, devoted a chapter of his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* to the Arab conquest of Egypt, in particular the destruction of the Library of Alexandria. He doubted the traditional story of the Caliph Umar ordering his general **Amr ibn al-As** to destroy the collection. Gibbon argues that the sources making this claim were written long after the event, and that the order would have been contrary to Islamic philosophy of the time. "The rigid sentence of Omar is repugnant to the sound and orthodox precept of the Mahometan casuists: They expressly declare that the religious books of the Jews and Christians, which are acquired by the right of war, should never be committed to the flames." Gibbon instead blamed what he saw as the fanaticism of the Christians, and particularly **Theophilus.** In 391 Theophilus gave orders to destroy the Serapeum, "and the library of Alexandria was . . . destroyed." Gibbons is not clear whether this was the smaller, Serapeum collection or the larger royal library.

MARTYRED BY THE MOB

Hypatia was a Greek mathematician, astronomer, philosopher, and daughter of the last known member of the Alexandrian Museum. Raphael painted her in *The School of Athens*.

far cry from Alexandria's heyday as a center of knowledge and learning.

Although the library had not been completely destroyed, there is no doubt that in the following decades its decline hastened. The city was shattered by violence time and time again, with near-constant war and power struggles making it harder than ever to preserve the scrolls. At the start of the seventh century a bloody civil war broke out over the throne of Byzantium. The battles between the usurper, Phocas, and the future Byzantine emperor Heraclius left a trail of destruction in Alexandria. Then in 618 further significant damage was suffered when Egypt was conquered by the Persians during the epic final struggle between the Byzantine and Sassanian Empires. Under the steadfast leadership of Heraclius, Egypt was retaken and the Persians subdued in 627. But even in victory the 20-year war's exhaustive cost in men and material would have devastating consequences for the library, as by then nobody had the strength to resist the next great invader: Islam.

SCALA, FLORENCE

> Hypatia died at the hands of a Christian mob who hated "pagan" classical scholarship.

The Arabs Take Alexandria

The final blow to the library seems to have fallen in the year 642. The Arab Muslim armies of the Rashidun Caliphate swept through the weakened Persian Empire and overwhelmed Byzantium's outlying territories. Egypt was lost completely. Alexandria itself was captured by a Muslim army led by Amr ibn al-As, the general who tradition says destroyed the library on the orders of Caliph Umar. The story was described in detail by a 13th-century Christian doctor and bishop, Bar Hebraeus. He even mentions a desperate attempt to save the library's books. According to Bar Hebraeus, the Arab general was a sensitive and cultured man. He listened

BRIAN JANNSEN/AGE FOTOSTOCK

to the pleas of the theologian John Philoponus and sent a letter to Caliph Umar asking for instructions on what to do with the books. Umar replied, "If their content is in accordance with the book of Allah, we may do without them . . . if, on the other hand, they contain matter not in accordance with the book of Allah, there can be no need to preserve them." The order was carried out. Arab sources written after the event confirmed the library's destruction; one of them even claims that the books were used as fuel to heat the city's baths, taking six months to burn.

However, much doubt has been cast on these accounts. In the 18th century the English historian Edward Gibbon considered the story unlikely, suggesting it was a fabrication to divert blame from the true culprits: Christians. Other authors point out that the theologian, John Philoponus, who supposedly interceded to save the scrolls, died long before the Arab occupation. Others suggest that by the time the Muslims arrived there was barely anything left in the library to destroy.

Whatever the truth, all traces of the Library of Alexandria have been lost, fulfilling what seems to have been the fate of many of the world's great libraries: falling victim to violence, intolerance, and adversity. Such incidents are not confined to the deep past. On December 18, 2011, the library of the Egyptian Scientific Institute was burned down. It had held 200,000 documents dating back to the 18th century—including a rare original of the *Description de l'Égypte,* the series of books drawn up by French scholars that helped spark the world's 19th century rediscovery of Egyptian culture. ■

DAVID HERNÁNDEZ DE LA FUENTE
HERNÁNDEZ DE LA FUENTE IS AN AWARD-WINNING NOVELIST AND HISTORIAN OF CLASSICAL LITERATURE, ANCIENT MYTHOLOGY, AND GREEK CIVILIZATION.

Learn more

BOOKS

The Rise and Fall of Alexandria: Birthplace of the Modern World
Justin Pollard, Penguin Books, 2007.

The Library of Alexandria: Centre of Learning in the Ancient World
Roy MacLeod, I. B. Tauris, 2004.

Hypatia: Her Life and Times
Faith L. Justice, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013.

MONUMENTS OF LEARNING

All the large cities of the Mediterranean established libraries as centers of learning. The library in Ephesus (above) was funded by and dedicated to the Greco-Roman senator Celsus. Built in A.D. 110, it contained 12,000 volumes.

The Roman catacombs of Alexandria are one of the few parts of the city that have survived relatively unscathed.

ALAMY/ACI

LIBRARIES IN HISTORY: VICTIMS OF

BURNING BOOKS DEPICTED IN A 15TH-CENTURY CHRONICLE

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

"The valuable library of Alexandria was pillaged or destroyed; and, near twenty years afterwards, the appearance of the empty shelves excited the regret and indignation of every spectator, whose mind was not totally darkened by religious prejudice."

EDWARD GIBBON

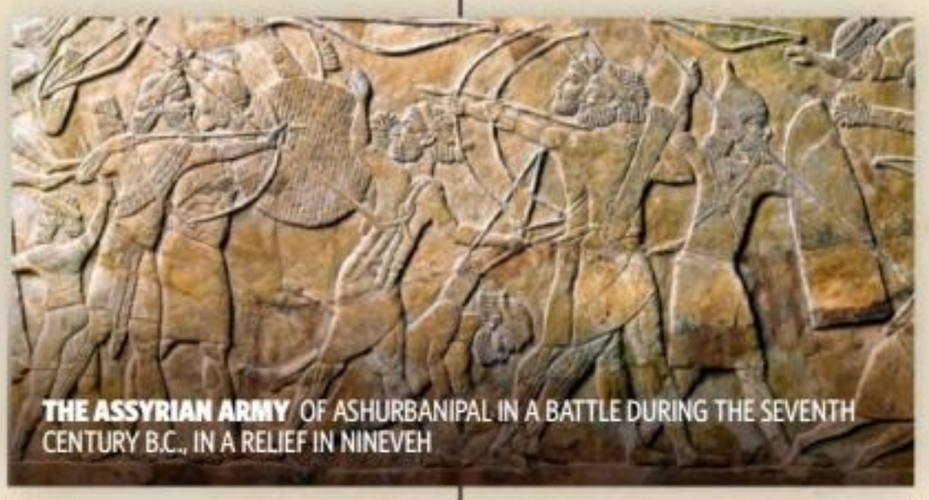
1 NEAR EAST

EBLA (Syria)

This is the oldest known library, created in **2500 B.C.** It was destroyed by the Akkadians around **2220 B.C.** In 1975 the city's archive of over 17,000 clay tablets was found amazingly intact.

THEBES (Egypt)

Ramses II created a "sacred library" or "house of books" in **1250 B.C.** Greek sources claimed it still existed in the sixth-century B.C., but after this it disappeared.



THE ASSYRIAN ARMY OF ASHURBANIPAL IN A BATTLE DURING THE SEVENTH CENTURY B.C., IN A RELIEF IN NINEVEH

DEA/ALBUM

NINEVEH (Iraq)

Ashurbanipal, King of Assyria, built a great library in his palace around **668 B.C.** Destroyed by the Babylonians and Medes in **612 B.C.,** 20,000 tablets were found in 1849.

PERSEPOLIS (Iran)

Darius I created a library in his palace, which was razed by Alexander the Great in **330 B.C.** In 1933 approximately 30,000 tablets were found.

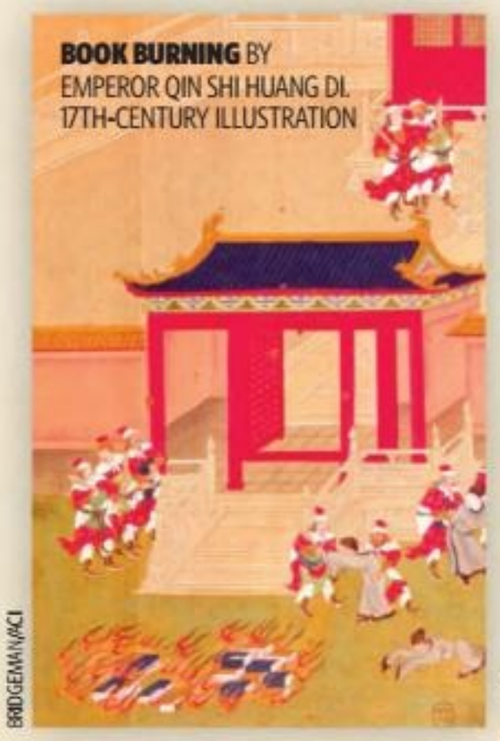
2 FAR EAST

CONFUCIUS (China)

In **213 B.C.** Emperor Qin Shi Huang Di ordered a burning of books, including those by philosopher Confucius.

JIANGLING (China)

The Liang dynasty's imperial library of 140,000 volumes was destroyed when the city was conquered in **554.**



BOOK BURNING BY EMPEROR QIN SHI HUANG DI. 17TH-CENTURY ILLUSTRATION

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

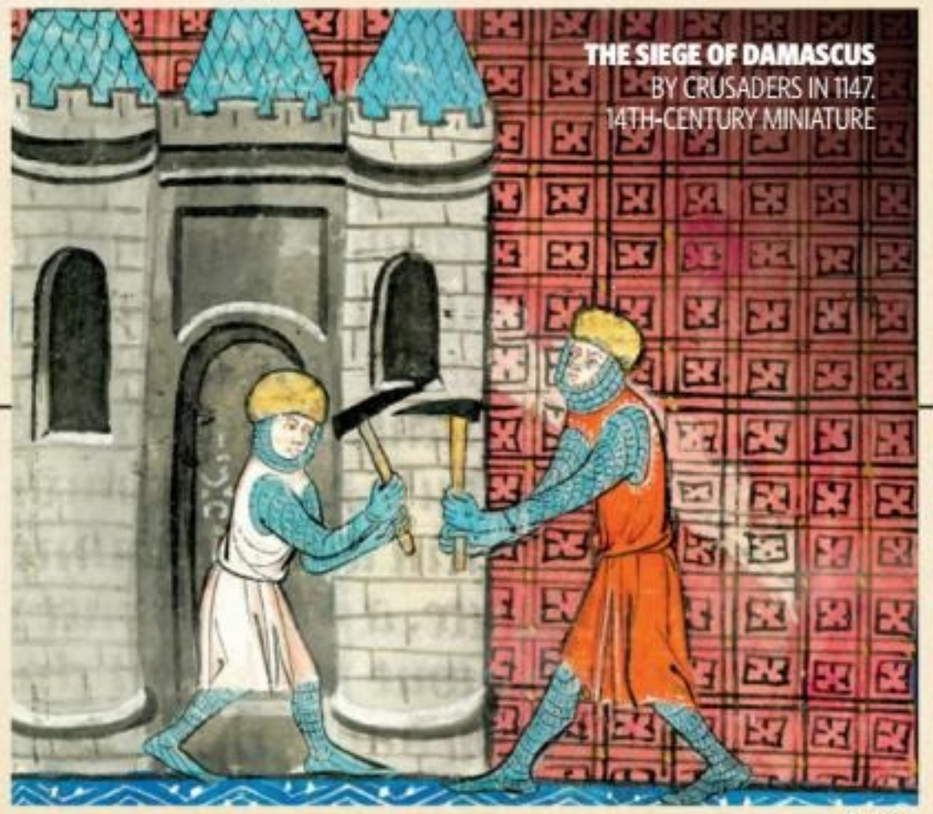
5 MIDDLE AGES

CÓRDOBA (Spain)

Around **960** Caliph al-Hakam II compiled an extraordinary library of an estimated 400,000 volumes. But in **994** minister and general Almanzor ordered all the non-Islamic books burned.

DAMASCUS (Syria)

This well-stocked library, containing valuable copies of Greek classics, was destroyed in acts of religious zeal carried out by Christian crusaders in **1108.**



THE SIEGE OF DAMASCUS BY CRUSADERS IN 1147. 14TH-CENTURY MINIATURE

AKG/ALBUM

BAGHDAD (Iraq)

The famed library of the Abbasid caliphs was destroyed in **1258** by the invading Mongols, who threw its manuscripts into the Tigris River, along with the corpses of their defeated enemy.

BUKHARA (Uzbekistan)

As they campaigned throughout Central Asia, the Mongols actively destroyed all the libraries in the cities they conquered. Bukhara was destroyed in **1220** and Merv in **1221.**

WAR, RELIGION, AND NATURE

3 GREECE

ATHENS (Greece)
The Lyceum school was founded in **335 B.C.** by the Greek thinker Aristotle. Its library held up to 10,000 scrolls. In **287 B.C.** these were inherited by Aristotle's disciple Neleus, who sold them in Alexandria.

ALEXANDRIA (Egypt)
Founded by Ptolemy I Soter in the early third century B.C., the library suffered many disasters. It was damaged in **48 B.C.;** in **A.D. 391;** during the Persian invasion of **618;** and finally, in the Islamic conquest of **642.**

ANTIOCH (Turkey)
Antiochus III founded an important library in **221 B.C.** Julian the Apostate created another library that his successor destroyed in **A.D. 364,** because it held pagan and anti-Christian works.

ARISTOTLE AND PLATO IN RAPHAEL'S FRESCO *THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS*

ORONOZ/ALBUM

PERGAMUM (Asia Minor)
This library of 200,000 books was founded by Eumenes II circa **195 B.C.** It competed in grandeur with the Library of Alexandria, to which Mark Antony is said to have transferred some of its holdings in **A.D. 41.**

4 ROME AND BYZANTIUM

EPHESUS (Asia Minor)
Built in the **SECOND CENTURY** in honor of Roman senator Celsus, the library housed 12,000 scrolls. Destroyed by an earthquake in **262,** its ruins attest to its splendor.

ROME (Italy)
The libraries of Rome were destroyed in **410,** when the city was sacked by the Visigoths. However, they were said to have already been in decline for decades.

ORONOZ/ALBUM

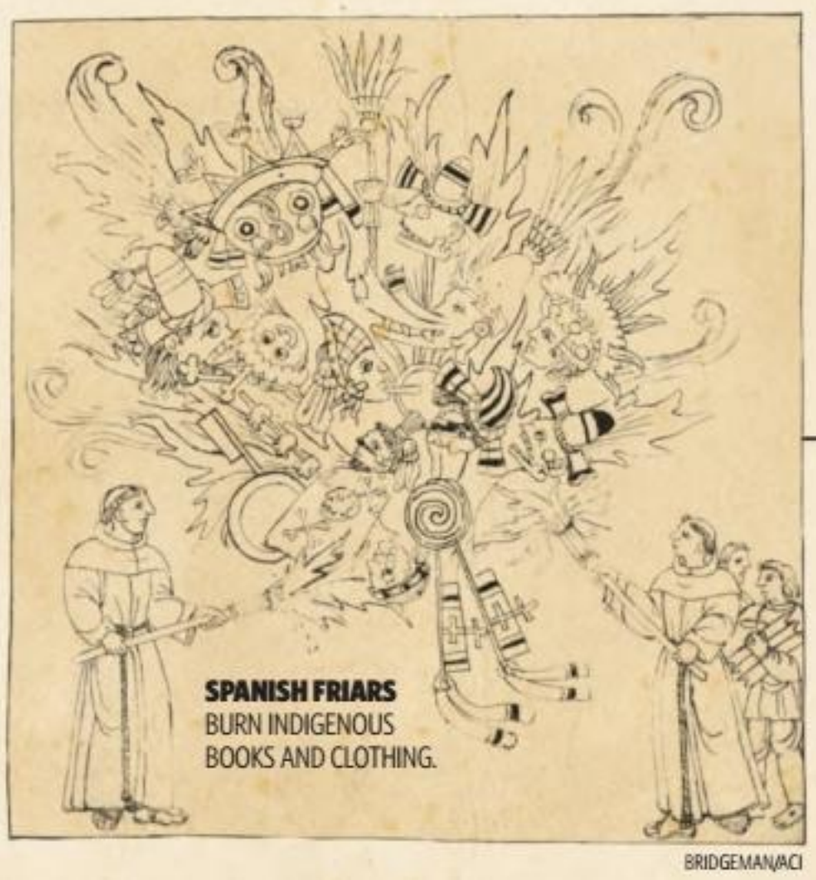
BRONZE VISIGOTHIC HARNESS.
NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, MADRID

MEHMED II CONQUERED CONSTANTINOPLE.

AKG/ALBUM

BYZANTIUM (Turkey)
The library of the Eastern Roman Empire was established in Byzantium in **330.** A fire destroyed 120,000 volumes in **472.** It was looted by crusaders in **1204** and destroyed by the Ottomans in **1453.**

6 MODERN ERA



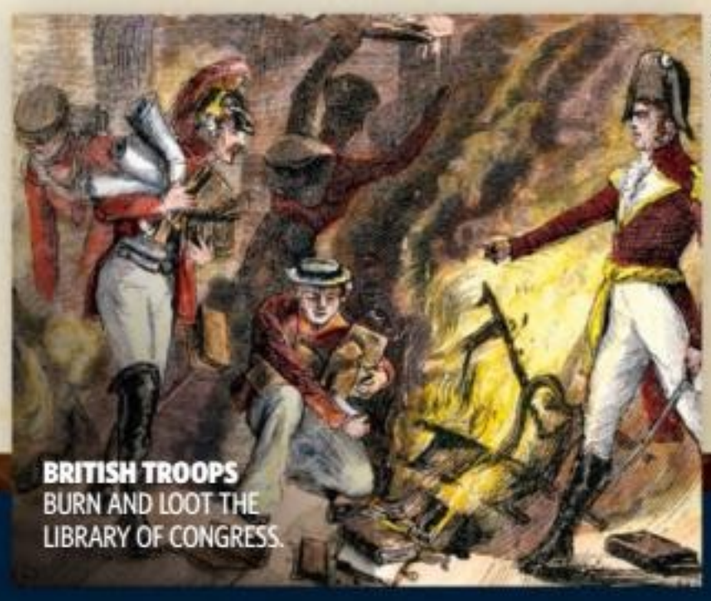
SPANISH FRIARS BURN INDIGENOUS BOOKS AND CLOTHING.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

BUDAPEST (Hungary)
In 1476 King Matthias Corvinus put together one of the finest libraries of the humanist era. After the **1526** Battle of Mohács, Süleyman the Magnificent confiscated all the library's books. Their fate remains a mystery.

YUCATÁN (Mexico)
With the Maya finally subjugated, a Spanish Franciscan monk organized a book burning in **1562.** Dozens of indigenous codices were set ablaze for containing "superstitions and lies of the devil."

WASHINGTON, D.C.
During the War of 1812, English soldiers set fire to the Library of Congress, destroying 3,000 volumes. The attack was in retaliation for a similar action by American soldiers during an invasion of Canada.



BRITISH TROOPS BURN AND LOOT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

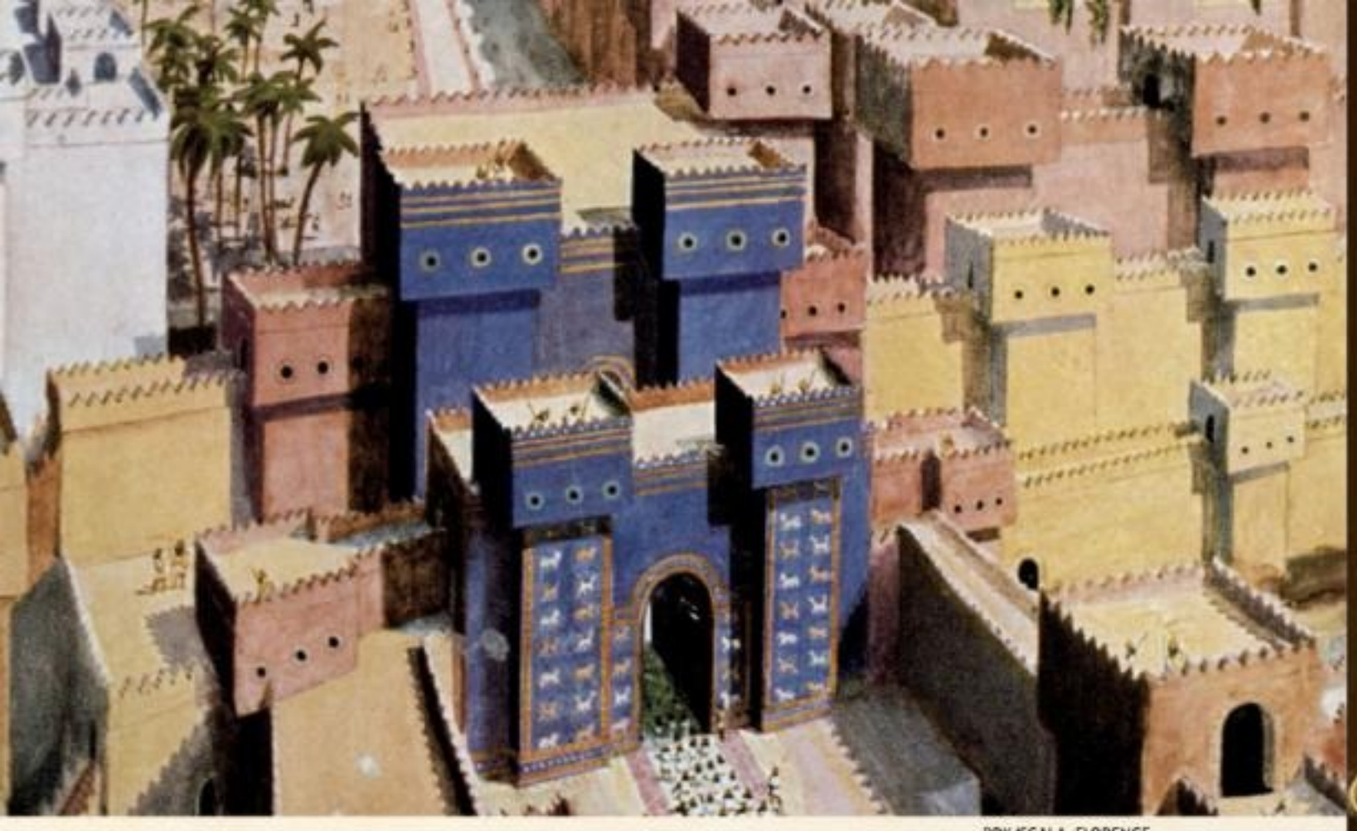
AKG/ALBUM

THE FIRST LAWMAKERS

To control the complex cities, states, and empires that emerged 4,000 years ago, the warrior kings of Mesopotamia were forced to take up a new weapon: the sword of justice. The rule of law had begun.

Hammurabi (left), the first king of the Babylonian Empire, devised one of the first written legal codes in history. Testifying to the growing importance of law in ancient Mesopotamia, the Code of Hammurabi sought to legitimize his reign by creating stability and justice.

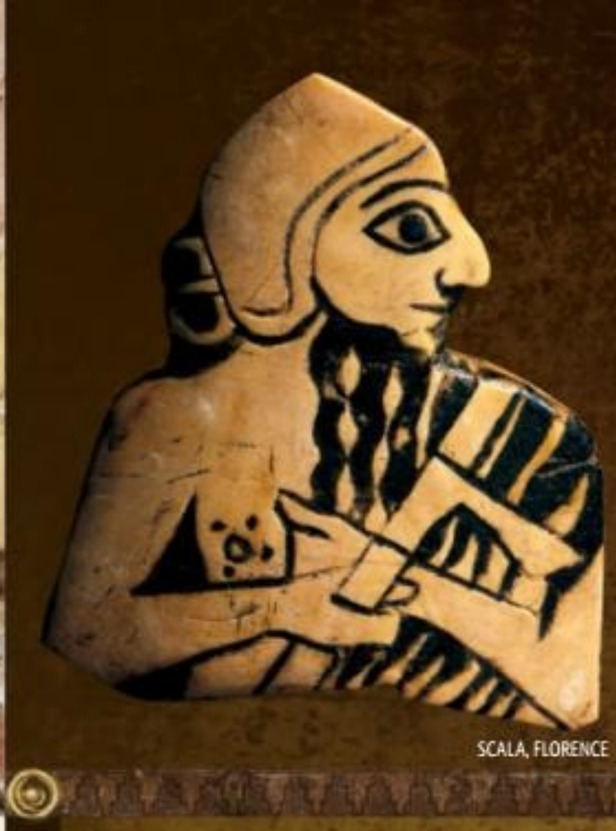
CHRISTIAN LARRIEU/RMN-GRAND PALAIS
E. LESSING/ALBUM (LEFT)



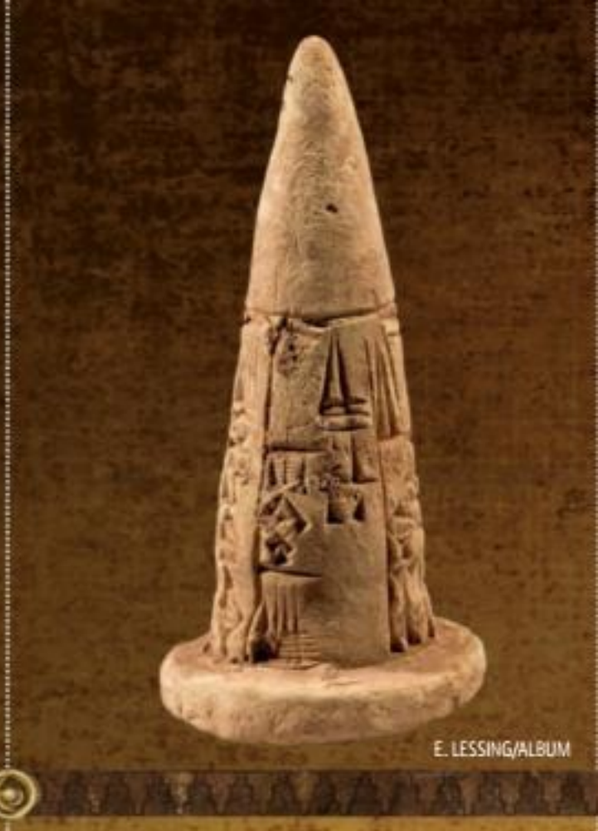
BPK/SCALA, FLORENCE

BRINGING LAW TO THE LAND

The emergence of the world's first written laws in Mesopotamia is inseparable from the birth and development of complex urban societies in the region, as city governments grew into states ruling over ever more territory and people. The first legal texts dealt with basic economic relations, but 1,200 years later the Code of Hammurabi encompassed much more: crime, family law, tax, and even the workings of justice itself.



SCALA, FLORENCE



E. LESSING/ALBUM

POLITICS

4000 - 3100 B.C.
The **Uruk period** marks the birth of the great city-states.

2900 - 2350 B.C.
Early Dynastic Period sees struggles between Sumerian cities (Uruk, Lagash, Kish, Ur).

2450 B.C.
The **first dynasty of Lagash** is founded by Ur-Nanshe. Its last king will be Urukagina.

2350 - 2150 B.C.
Akkadian Empire grows under Sargon I and later Naram-Sin.

LAW

3000 - 2900 B.C.
The first legal precedents are created in the form of cuneiform texts recording simple legal transactions like the sale and purchase of land between related individuals.

Soldier (tortoiseshell), Ur, third millennium B.C.

2320 B.C.
After acceding to the throne, Urukagina, king of the city-state of Lagash, promotes what is considered to be the first legal code in history. No copy of it has been found.

Inscriptions on the reforms of Urukagina, 2320 B.C.

BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON

When Hammurabi came to the throne, Babylon was the greatest city in Mesopotamia. He made it his capital, and it remained the commercial and administrative center of Babylonia for centuries. Its ruins are in present-day Iraq, 55 miles south of Baghdad.

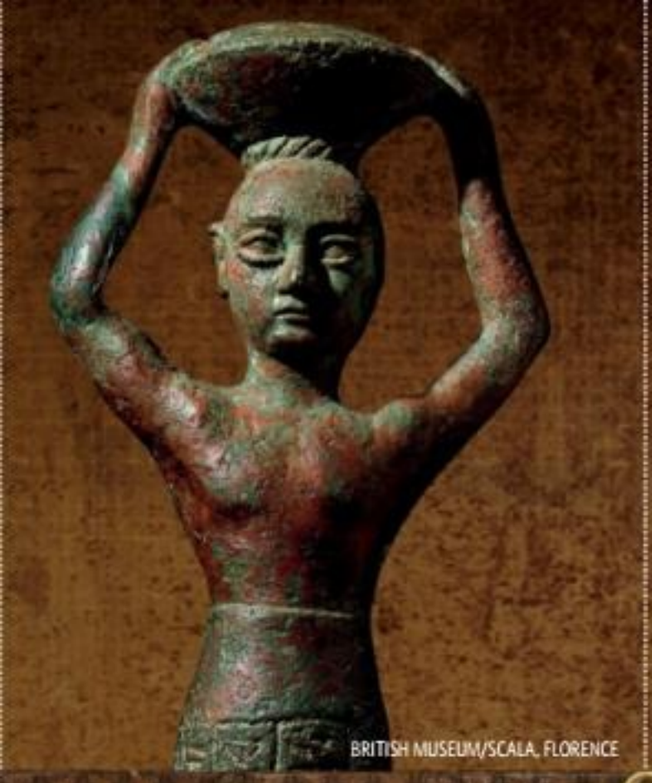
NGS MAPS

At more than seven feet tall, the jet-black pillar looms menacingly over visitors to the Louvre in Paris, much as it would over the first city dwellers nearly 4,000 years ago. Around 1758 B.C. a gifted Mesopotamian craftsman was charged with carving a great slab of diorite into an imposing royal stela. His mandate was to inspire awe in all who beheld it. He did a good job. Now as then, the eye is irresistibly drawn to the top of this daunting monument, where the sculptor has wrought a scene of intense solemnity.

Here is King Hammurabi of Babylon, raising his right hand in a gesture of reverence toward a majestic figure seated on a throne. This is Shamash, the Mesopotamian god of the sun and of justice, a deity who exercised the power of light over darkness and evil. Shamash is offering Hammurabi a staff and a ring, the sacred objects with which this monarch will rule his subjects. The god's feet rest on the mountains, and from his shoulders burst rays of sunshine. Below this impressive scene the monument is packed with a density of cuneiform script, with thousands of characters detailing the largest set of laws ever to be compiled prior to the Roman Republic. The code that stands as a precursor to modern legal systems would forever bear the name of the king who commissioned it.

In a time when few people could read, the visual impact of the stela's grandiose design was crucial for conveying the gravity of its message to illiterate citizens. Displaying this monument in a prominent public place made a powerful statement: Hammurabi was more than just a strong king, he was also wise and just. But despite the impressive legal decrees laid down in its text, there is still much debate over the extent to which they were actually applied. It is unclear whether these laws were ever intended to be rigorously enforced, or if they were assembled and displayed simply to reinforce the authority of the ruler and be a warning to his subjects.

What we do know is that the story of how these remarkable laws came into being began

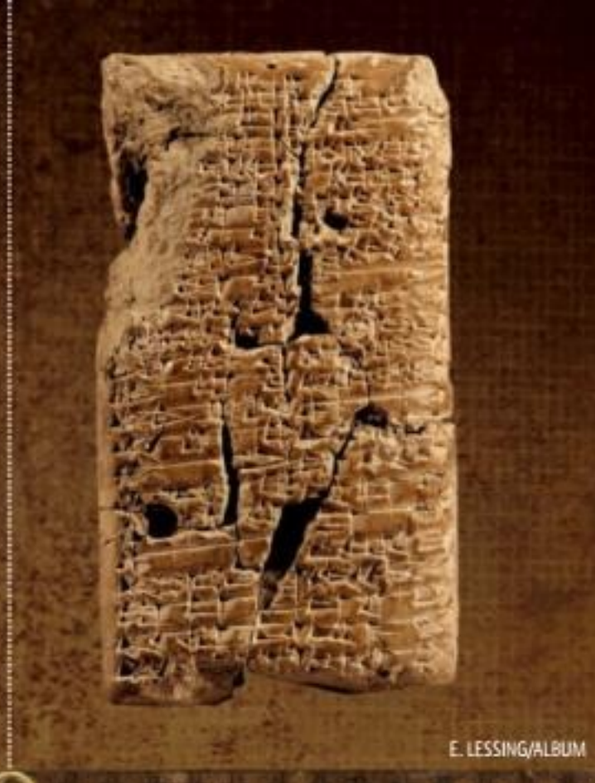


BRITISH MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE

2100 - 2000 B.C.
The **third dynasty of Ur** forms the powerful empire of Sumer. Invasions by the Amorites, combined with attacks from the kingdoms of Elam and Shimashki, bring about the collpase of Ur.

2112 - 2047 B.C.
The first Mesopotamian legal code is written: The Code of Ur-Nammu. Although attributed to the first king of the third Ur dynasty, it could be the work of his son and successor, Shulgi.

Ur-Nammu, Foundation Figure, 2112 B.C.



E. LESSING/ALBUM

2000 - 1800 B.C.
The **Isin and Larsa period** sees Amorite nomads establishing dynasties in Mesopotamia. Political upheaval in the south is caused by the struggle for hegemony between the cities of Isin and Larsa.

1934 - 1924 B.C.
Lipit-Ishtar, king of the city of Isin, fights to consolidate his control of Sumer (Lower Mesopotamia). To support his authority he orders the writing of his own legal code.

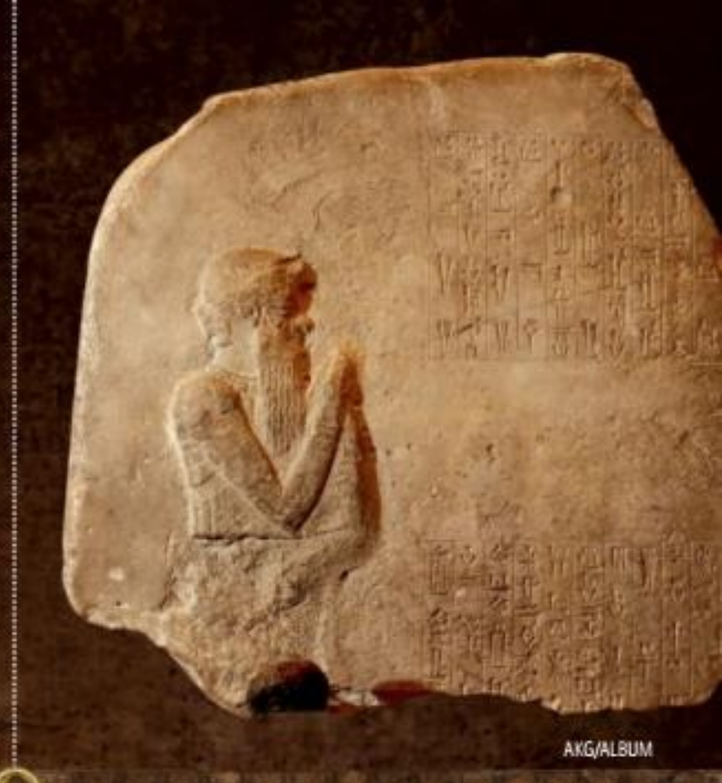
Prologue to the Code of Lipit-Ishtar

E. LESSING/ALBUM

Mid 19th-century B.C.
The seizure of the Diyala River Valley gives the city of Eshnunna control over vital commercial routes between the Zagros Mountains and southern Mesopotamia. Around 1760 B.C. Hammurabi takes Eshnunna.

1800 B.C.
In the first year of Dadusha's reign over the city of Eshnunna, a new legal code is proclaimed. It almost coincides with that of the great King Hammurabi.

Fighters on a Eshnunna relief, third millennium B.C.



AKG/ALBUM

1792 B.C.
Hammurabi, sixth king of the first Amorite dynasty of Babylon, accedes to the throne. His son, Samsu-Iluna succeeds him in 1750 B.C., by which time his empire stretches from the Persian Gulf to the middle Euphrates.

1758 B.C.
Hammurabi of Babylon orders the compiling of a legal code that will be remembered as the first comprehensive legal corpus in history.

Stela dedicated to Hammurabi, second millennium B.C.

hundreds of years earlier with the most ancient of all legal systems—the Sumerian laws. These first emerged in Mesopotamia toward the end of the third millennium B.C., a natural result of the evolution of complex urban societies and the development of writing.

The Code Makers

"Urukagina has reached agreement with the god Ningirsu that the orphan and the widow will not be at the mercy of the powerful." This pious injunction comes from the legal reforms put in place by Urukagina, king of the city of Lagash. Faced with an economic crisis, Urukagina enacted a series of measures designed to cancel the mounting taxes of his citizens. These rulings are among the first to demonstrate how important making and enforcing laws had become for Mesopotamia's rulers. To the three guiding values of kingship—strength, courage, and a warrior spirit—Urukagina would be the first to add a fourth: justice.

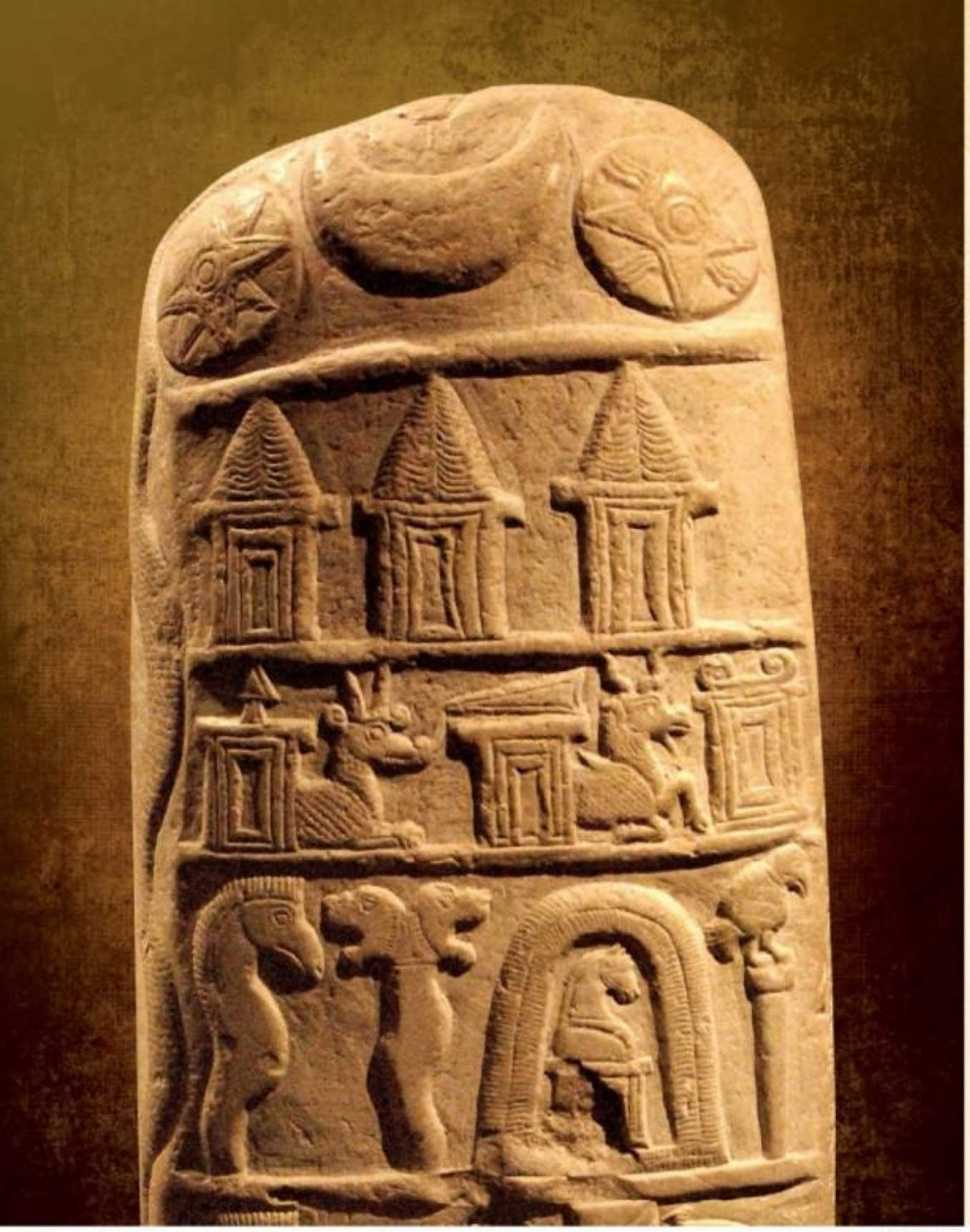
This was an era of significant political and social upheaval, when the city-state had begun evolving toward a new political structure: empire. The first large-scale empire in Mesopotamia took shape with the extensive territorial conquests made by Sargon of Akkad, who came to the throne in 2334 B.C. When his Akkadian Empire fell it was replaced by another powerful and imperialist state, the third dynasty of Ur. Its founder, King Ur-Nammu, published the earliest law code yet discovered—the Code of Ur-Nammu. In its prologue the monarch unequivocally establishes his role as the guarantor of justice: "Then did Ur-Nammu the mighty warrior, king of Ur, king of Sumer and Akkad, by the might of Nanna, lord of the city, and in accordance with the true word of Utu, establish justice in the land." Nearly 350 years before Hammurabi this monarch was already emphasizing the nascent but increasingly important idea that Mesopotamian rulers had a duty to safeguard the established order and uphold justice.

Ur-Nammu's set of laws was one of the world's first attempts to draw

A RULER BY DIVINE RIGHT

This agate stone (below) is inscribed with a dedication to the god Shamash by King Hammurabi. From 1792-1750 B.C. the monarch ruled over one of the major power centers of Mesopotamia.

BRITISH MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE



PRISMA/ALBUM

PROTECTED BY THE GODS

A *kudurru* or stone document recording a land grant (above) shows the symbols of the gods Sin, Ishtar, and Shamash. Mesopotamian religion worshipped a pantheon of gods who often behaved like mortals, resulting in a rich and extensive mythology.

THE WRATH OF THE GODS

A CURSE UPON TRANSGRESSORS

Earthly punishments awaited those who contravened the laws enshrined in the Mesopotamian legal codes. In their epilogues, divine wrath was called down on rulers who later altered or ignored these laws. Among the curses invoked in the Code of Hammurabi, the king beseeches Enlil, supreme deity of the Mesopotamian pantheon, to bring "rebellion [on such a successor] which his hand cannot control . . . may he ordain the years of his rule in groaning, years of scarcity, years of famine, darkness without light, and death with seeing eyes be fated to him." The god Adad is requested to "withhold from him rain from heaven, and the flood of water from the springs, destroying all his land by famine and want." King Hammurabi asks the god Nergal to deploy his strength "to burn up his subjects like a slender reed," while the goddess Nintu is called on to "deny him a son . . . and give him no successors among men." The goddess Ninkarrak is invoked to inflict "fever, and severe wounds that cannot be healed, and whose nature the physician does not understand."

together and codify a state's legal practices. Besides laying down the law, it included powerful deterrents in the form of severe punishments for transgressors. Many of its penalties seem both cruel and unusual to modern sensibilities; adulterers, for example, could expect the death penalty. Other punishments appear to anticipate the biblical injunction, written centuries later, of an eye for an eye: "If a man commits a murder," it says, "then that man will himself be put to death."

I Am The Law

From around 2000 B.C. southern Mesopotamia suffered a prolonged period of political instability. It was during these turbulent years that Lipit-Ishtar, king of the city of Isin, developed another of the world's first legal codes. As Ur-Nammu before him, Lipit-Ishtar considered it his monarchial right to uphold order in his land. Indeed he believed it to be his exclusive prerogative, divinely bestowed on him by the gods.

This fundamental idea is expressed in the code's prologue: "At that time, I, Lipit-Ishtar, the pious shepherd of the city of Nippur . . . the king of the city of Isin, king of the lands of Sumer and Akkad, chosen as the heart's desire of the goddess Inanna, by the command of the god Enlil, established justice in the lands of Sumer and Akkad." This statement contains a metaphor much used by Mesopotamian rulers: shepherd. As the shepherd tends his flock, so the monarch protects, guides, and corrects the behavior of his people by means of the law. "I ensured that parents cared for their children," says Lipit-Ishtar, "I ensured that children cared for their parents." Lipit-Ishtar stresses the novel idea that a ruler commands more than military might; he is also *shar misharim*, Akkadian for "king of justice."

The Code of Lipit-Ishtar contains 38 extant laws covering subjects as diverse as murder, land management, the status of slaves, tax evasion, inheritance, marriage, and the hiring of oxen and boats. Such a wide variety of situations reflects the growing needs of an ever more complex urban society in which harmonious living was increasingly difficult without recourse to an established system of laws and punishments.

GEORG GERSTER/AGE FOTOSTOCK

GONZALO AZUMENDI

The First Legal Systems

What also emerges is a systematization of the way the laws are written. In the Code of Lipit-Ishtar each legal case or article is presented in two parts. The first part, the protasis, lays out the hypothetical situation using the conditional tense. The second part, the apodosis, details the corresponding sentence or penalty to be enforced. For example: "If one man accuses another man, but has no basis for his accusation, and on a matter of which the accused knows nothing, and if the accuser is not able to substantiate his assertion, he will then suffer a sanction equivalent to that injury about which he had made his false accusation." A similar structure had been used in the laws of Ur-Nammu and would appear again in the Code of Hammurabi and other much later laws of the Assyrian Middle Kingdom.

Indeed, the overall organization of most Mesopotamian legal codes followed traditions laid down by Ur-Nammu. This includes the use of a prologue and an epilogue that reflect the ruler's ideology. Within the prologue a prominent role is given to the gods of the Sumerian-Akkadian pantheon, especially Enlil, Shamash, and Marduk, who alone granted the king his divine right to make laws. The epilogue takes the important stand of condemning any who dare question the validity of the law, declaring such an act a crime in itself. Lipit-Ishtar's epilogue lays down terrible curses on those who violate, alter, or appropriate his code. In this way the legal codes bolstered a monarch's political program by adding the image of a just king to that of his warrior role. It is in this light that these bodies of laws have been seen more as a reflection of the ideal values of Mesopotamian rulers, rather than a code that would be literally applied.

On acceding to the throne of Eshnunna, King Dadusha proclaimed a body of laws to establish his rule as one dedicated to justice and stability. The Eshnunna Code included some interesting innovations. Its 60 articles are complemented by tariffs, indicating that some physical damage would require compensation: "If a man bites the nose of another man, causing it to be severed, he will pay a quantity of silver." This could seem to suggest that the law was mellowing, but within

THE MIGHTY ZIGGURATS OF BABYLONIA

Babylonia was known for its great stepped pyramids, called ziggurats. The temples' terraces were planted with shrubs, perhaps the inspiration for the famed Hanging Gardens. Choga Zanbil (above), in western Iran, was one of the largest.

TIBOR BOGNÁR/AGE FOTOSTOCK

THE GATES TO A GREAT CITY

Babylon was the capital of several of the world's first empires. It honored Ishtar as its patron, the goddess of war and sexual love. Decorated in glazed bricks, the Ishtar Gate was one of eight entrances to Babylon's inner city.

A TROPHY OF WAR

FINDING THE CODE OF HAMMURABI

In 1901 a French team of archaeologists led by Jacques de Morgan arrived in the ancient Elamite city of Susa, in the southwest of present-day Iran. In the *tell*, the artificial hill formed by the city's ruins, they made important discoveries, including the large diorite Code of Hammurabi stela. It had likely been transferred to Susa as part of the war booty of Shutruk-Nahhunte, the ruler of Elam who had leveled cities across southern Mesopotamia around 1158 B.C., 600 years after Hammurabi. The stela was found broken in three pieces. Several sections of text at its base had been erased, probably in preparation for inscribing the name of the victorious Shutruk-Nahhunte, a symbolic act that was never carried out. The stela was taken to the Louvre Museum in Paris, where the text was reconstructed thanks to other versions of the code that had been found. It was then deciphered and translated by the Dominican monk Jean-Vincent Scheil, a renowned philologist and Assyriologist who had taken part in the expedition of discovery to Susa. His translation was published in 1904.

just 30 years a far more severe set of laws would be issued: the Code of Hammurabi.

The Great Lawmaker

Hammurabi was the sixth king of the first Amorite dynasty. The Amorites were nomads who had helped to topple the third dynasty of Ur and had then seized power in cities across Mesopotamia, including Babylon, its most important urban center. From here Hammurabi managed to control the unstable south of Mesopotamia, and, as Lipit-Ishtar and others had done before him, he ordered a stela to be carved with his new code of laws. It was then publicly displayed in an effort to assert and reinforce his authority.

The image and text of this extraordinary monument was intended to legitimize Hammurabi as a king of justice, as a shepherd of his people, and as a governor concerned for his subjects. These three ideas, already present in previous legal codes, now emerged as clearly defining characteristics of Amorite kingship.

"When Marduk sent me to rule over men," runs the prologue, "to give the protection of right to the land, I did right and righteousness in . . . and brought about the well-being of the oppressed."

The Code of Hammurabi represents the culmination of Mesopotamia's first legal bodies: It is the best known and most cited of all ancient legal references. It is also the most complete code of its time, with 282 articles covering a relatively wide range of themes: criminal law, such as assault, injury, theft, damage, and public order; economic law, including prices, commerce, the setting of a cap on interest rates, and the tax system; and civil and family laws regarding marriage, divorce, succession, work, debt, servants, and slaves.

Some of its articles suggest a toughening of punishments in line with the earlier laws of Ur-Nammu: "If someone rends the wall of a house [to burgle it], they will be killed before that very breach." It is such severity that has led to the Code of Hammurabi long being associated with the similarly rigorous law of talion, whose practices were adopted in the Mosaic law of the

UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP/ALBUM

Bible. Lawbreakers faced harsh consequences, including the death penalty for many crimes. In the case of incest: "If a man, after the death of his father, lies with his mother, both will be burned." It also prescribed mutilation, impaling, and forms of divine justice, such as trial by ordeal. In the latter, the accused was submitted to a physical trial that would normally prove fatal. Ordeal by water was one of the most common and was the fate decreed for women suspected of adultery. The woman would be cast into a river and if she was saved, the gods had declared her innocence; if she drowned, that was a divine sign of her guilt.

The political motive that underlies the Code of Hammurabi is clear. In a period of crisis and instability King Hammurabi presents himself as a staunch defender of political and social stability: His laws are sanctioned by the gods and enforced on earth by the king himself. A similar political motive underlies the code's epilogue, filled with terrible curses directed at those who dared contravene its laws or vandalize the stela on which they were inscribed. Actual systematic application of the laws was, in fact, very unlikely. This was a text whose principal goal was to awe and intimidate. Even if its sentences were often practically unenforceable, the Code of Hammurabi still stands as the first comprehensive legal code in the history of universal law. Its rulings on the death penalty, judicial malpractice, and divorce still resonate. It tells us a great deal about human nature that the laws deemed important enough to be carved in stone 4,000 years ago concern matters that continue to challenge societies today. ■

ALEJANDRO GALLEGO
GALLEGO HAS WORKED IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFGHANISTAN AND IS AN EXPERT ON ANCIENT ORIENTAL CULTURES.

APPEALING TO A JUST KING

This modern illustration by Robert Thom imagines King Hammurabi seated on his throne, dispensing justice in his Babylonian court. Hammurabi considered it his divine right to make and uphold the law.

Learn more

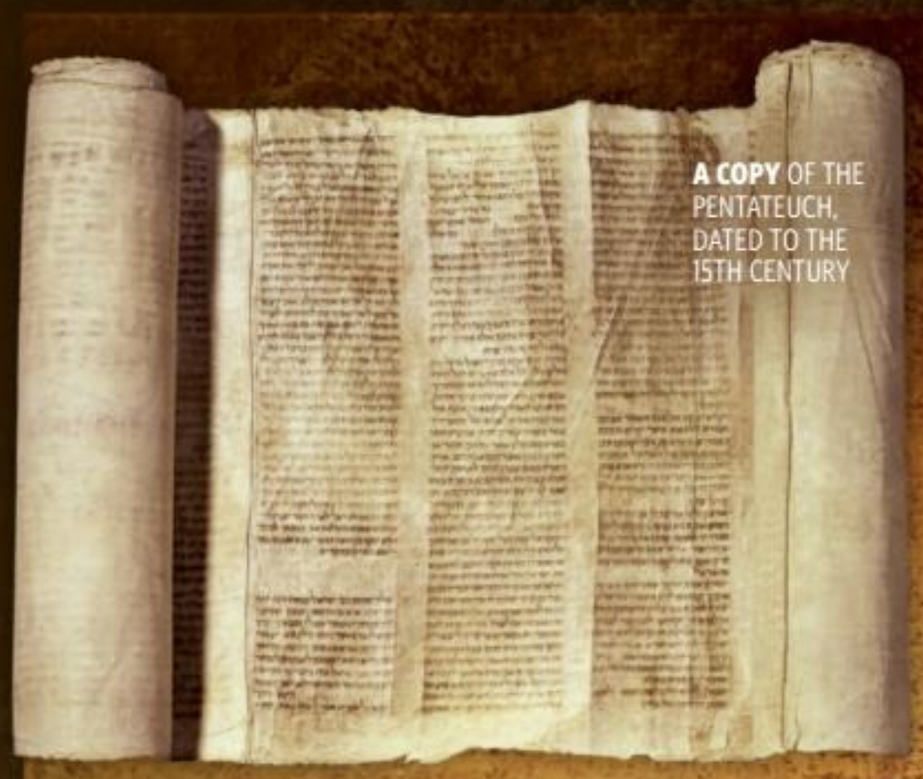
BOOKS

King Hammurabi of Babylon: A Biography
Marc Van De Mieroop, Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

The Oldest Code of Laws in the World. The Code of Laws Promulgated by Hammurabi, King of Babylon B.C. 2285-2242
Hammurabi, Hard Press, 2006.

Babylon: Mesopotamia and the Birth of Civilization
Paul Kriwaczek, St. Martin's Griffin, 2012.

ISRAEL AND BABYLON: TWO SIDES

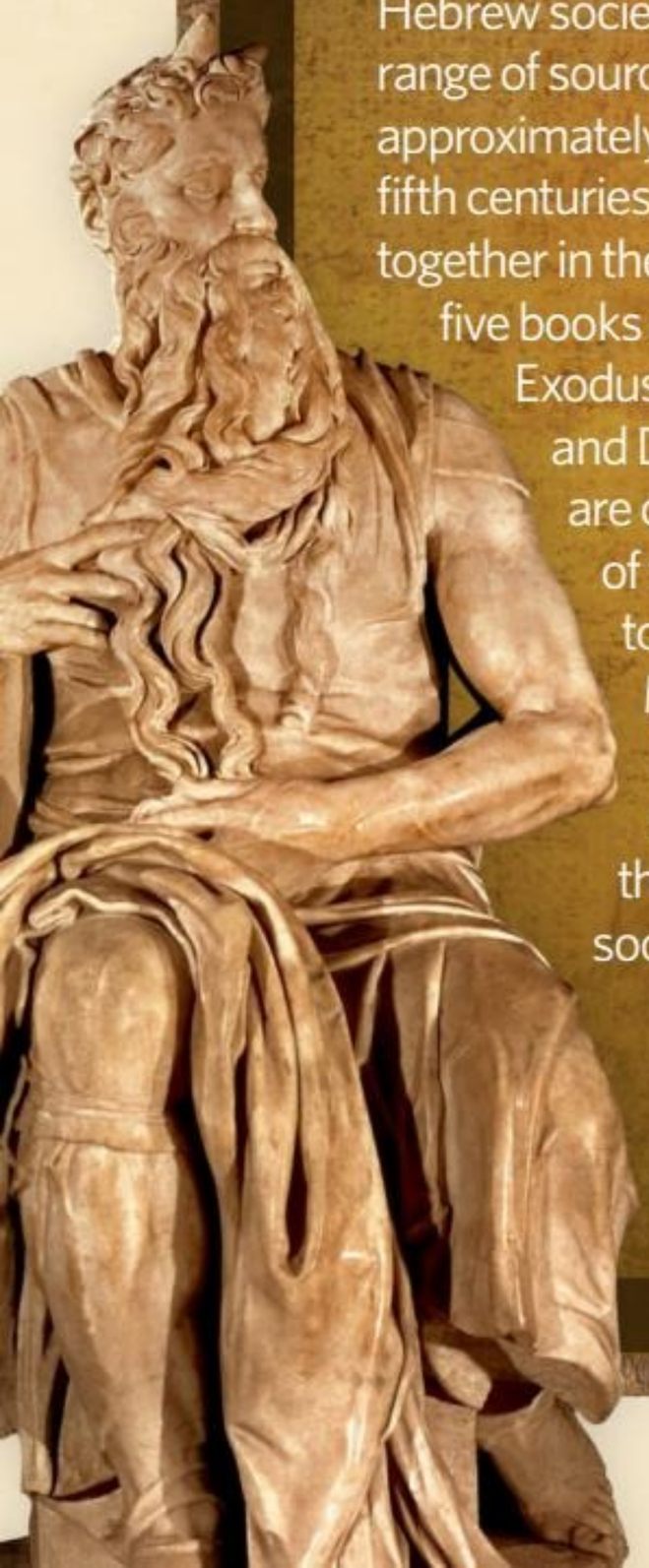


A COPY OF THE PENTATEUCH, DATED TO THE 15TH CENTURY

ALBUM

THE LAWS OF THE HEBREWS

The Mosaic law that governed Hebrew society is drawn from a range of sources and traditions dating approximately from the tenth to the fifth centuries B.C. They were collected together in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These are considered the essence of the Torah and are said to have been written by Moses. The laws they lay down reflect a less sophisticated world than the much earlier urban societies of Mesopotamia.



MOSES, LEADER OF THE HEBREWS DURING THEIR EXODUS, BEARING THE TABLETS OF THE LAW IN A SCULPTURE BY MICHELANGELO

ORONOZ/ALBUM

DIVORCE

Hebrew law accepts divorce only if it is sought by the husband.

"If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if . . . she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce . . . or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the Lord."

ADULTERY

Mosaic law recommends harsh penalties for adultery.

"If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death."

When a wife is suspected of adultery she had to undergo what was called the ordeal of the bitter waters (possibly a toxin) before a priest.

"[The priest] shall take some holy water in a clay jar and put some dust from the tabernacle floor into the water . . . The priest is to write curses on a scroll and then wash them off into the bitter water . . . after that, he is to have the woman drink the water. If she has made herself impure . . . her abdomen will swell and her womb will miscarry."

CHILDREN

One of the punishments our modern minds find most severe is Mosaic law dealing out the death penalty to children who confront or disobey their parents.

"If someone has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard.' Then all the men of his town are to stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid."

TO THE LAWS OF FAMILY LIFE

The Code of Hammurabi considers many scenarios for divorce.

"If a man wishes to separate from a woman who has borne him children . . . then he shall return that wife her dowry, and a part of the field, garden, and property, with which she can raise her children . . . She may then marry."

Women were also permitted to request a divorce.

"An investigation is carried out among her neighbors . . . If she is guiltless, and there is no fault on her part, [and if] he walks out on her and neglects her, then no guilt attaches to this woman. She shall take her dowry and return to her father's house."

Hammurabi's laws also punished adultery severely.

"If a man's wife be discovered with another man, both shall be tied together and thrown into the water."

The same laws, however, also rule that a husband could forgive his wife and the king could pardon her lover.

A woman suspected of adultery underwent ordeal by water.

"If a woman is pointed out [by public opinion] as being unfaithful with another man, but she is not caught sleeping with the other man, she shall jump into the river for her husband."

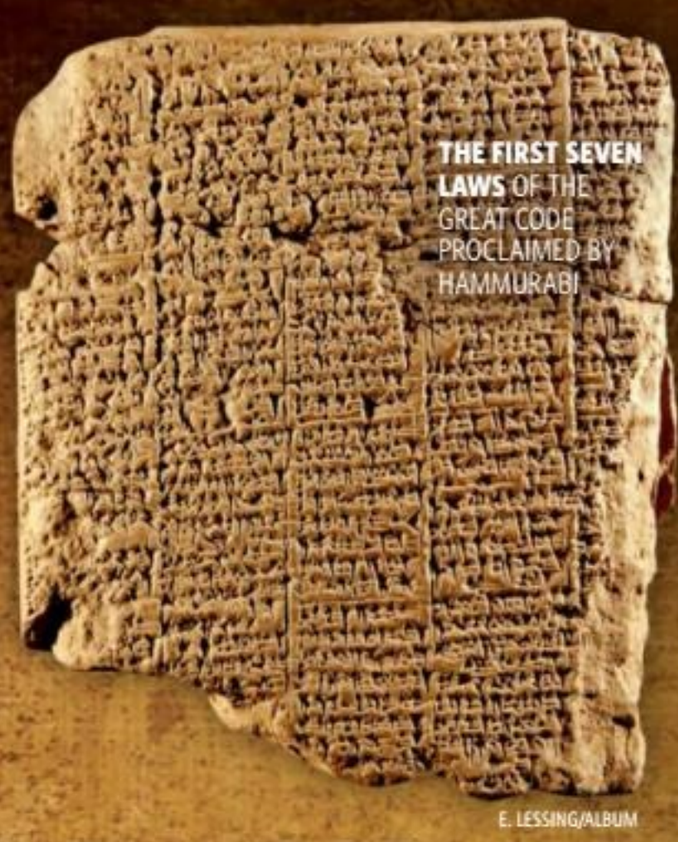
If the accused woman survived the immersion, she would be declared innocent.

The laws of Hammurabi rule that if a son commits two grievous offenses against his father, a judge can disinherit him. Even in an extreme case, such as a son assaulting his father, the child would suffer amputation rather than capital punishment.

"If a son strike his father, his hands shall be cut off."

The code set limits on patriarchal authority. A father could not automatically disinherit his son, and would have to follow a proper legal procedure.

"If a man wish to put his son out of his house . . . then the judge shall examine into his reasons. If the son be guilty of no great fault, for which he can be rightfully put out, the father shall not put him out."



THE FIRST SEVEN LAWS OF THE GREAT CODE PROCLAIMED BY HAMMURABI

E. LESSING/ALBUM

THE LAWS OF HAMMURABI

Family law in the Babylonian code is more egalitarian than its Hebrew counterpart. Marriage in Israel was understood to be the purchase of a woman, and only men could ask for divorce. However, in Babylonia separation could also be requested by women. Both Mosaic and Babylonian law included some severe practices, like ordeals for adulterous women, but children are treated more compassionately by Hammurabi's code.

HAMMURABI STANDING IN THE PRESENCE OF THE GOD SHAMASH, AT THE TOP OF THE STELA THAT CARRIED HIS FAMOUS LEGAL CODE

E. LESSING/ALBUM

As in more modern times the treatment of war wounds drove the development of Greek medicine. On this fifth-century drinking cup, Achilles bandages Patroclus's wounds during the Trojan War.

BPK/SCALA, FLORENCE

CURING ANCIENT GREECE

With their passion for war and learning, the Greeks took healing seriously. The works of Hippocrates stressed the role of science in an age of superstition, launching the world's advance toward modern medicine.

Homer's epic poem *The Iliad* recounts the deeds of two soldiers in the army of King Agamemnon: Machaon and Podalirius. These men were lauded as heroes not only because they were courageous warriors skilled in the craft of killing, but also because they used an extraordinary surgical knowledge to save the lives of their Greek comrades fighting in the Trojan War. Machaon and Podalirius are described as "two good doctors," making them the first named doctors in history. According to Homer a doctor (*iatrós* in Greek) was "worth more than several other men put together," because he practiced a recognized and respected profession. He was in the social class of *demioergós*, a valued public servant with special skills, alongside diviners, master carpenters, and men who recited poetry. Greek literature and writing mention many doctors, good and bad, as well as scientists who specialized in medical research. However, by far the most famous Greek doctor was Hippocrates, whose teachings and writings ushered in a period of Greek medicine we can start to call scientific.

THE CITY OF LEARNING

Trajan's Temple in Pergamum would have been a regular sight for the great Greek doctor Galen, who began his medical studies in the city's sanctuary of Asclepius.

FUNKYSTOCK/AGE FOTOSTOCK

Hippocrates lived sometime between 460 and 375 B.C. He was born on the island of Kos, where he founded the medical school that bore his name, and where he wrote the first of his medical treatises. These are included in the *Hippocratic Corpus*, a collection of almost 60 groundbreaking medical texts that made up a library dedicated to the theory and practice of medicine. The *Hippocratic Corpus* gathered together and analyzed huge amounts of data about diseases and aspects of medicine as diverse as anatomy, physiology, gynecology, pathology, epidemiology, and surgery. What set it apart was a methodical and rational approach that stressed detailed observation of patients and their ailments. It paid particular attention to diet at a time when pharmacology and internal surgery were little understood. There was also a strong focus on preventive medicine, especially spotting the signs of a sickness developing, making a correct diagnosis, and then providing guidance for improvement or recovery.

Hippocrates' disciples and the first philosophers shared the idea that *physis*, or nature, is a set of phenomena that must be explained through study, using reason and experiment. As a result, the Hippocratic texts were written in clear and simple prose, recounting experiences and interpreting the facts using critical theory and scientific debate. Doctors tried to heal the sick by first finding out what was causing the illness and then determining what treatments would be most effective for dealing with it. This was all done with a relatively limited level of scientific understanding: doctors of the day knew nothing of microbes, blood circulation, or chemistry. However, the methodical and objective focus of the *téchne iatriké*, the healing profession, is exemplary for the time. Their approach produced a form of medicine that was rational, empirical, and scientific, rather than magical or religious. As such, it was in sharp contrast to the older medical traditions of China and Egypt. But for all this, the rituals around Greek healing also often had a distinctly religious flavor.

WHITE IMAGES/SCALA, FLORENCE

SETTING THE WORLD STANDARD

GREEK DOCTORS were the most sought after in the world. In this painting the Persian king Artaxerxes II offers Hippocrates a fortune in treasure to treat and save the Persian army from a devastating epidemic. Although the story is apocryphal, it is indicative of the great esteem in which Greek doctors were held: Erasistratus worked for the Seleucid kings, Chrysippus at the court of Pharaoh Ptolemy II, and Galen for several Roman emperors.

GODS AND DOCTORS

FIFTH CENTURY B.C.
The worship of Asclepius, god of medicine, develops in sanctuaries at Kos, Pergamum, and Epidaurus.

FIFTH-FOURTH CENTURY B.C.
Hippocrates founds his medical school on Kos. Other schools also flourish in Knidos and Croton.

THIRD CENTURY B.C.
The Museum of Alexandria, in Egypt, becomes the main medical training center in the Mediterranean.

FIRST-SECOND CENTURY A.D.
Rome welcomes famous Greek doctors such as Dioscorides, Galen, Soranus, Antyllus, and Aretaeus.

A MEDICINE MAKER IN A ROMAN RELIEF FROM THE SECOND CENTURY A.D.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

MIRACLE CURES FOR CASH

When ailing Greeks didn't want to entrust their recovery to mere mortals, they could seek the intervention of Asclepius, the god of medicine, by visiting one of his sanctuaries for treatment—at a price.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Healing dreams: getting better by sleeping

ASCLEPIUS LAYS HIS HANDS on a sick woman in this votive relief from a sanctuary in Piraeus, near Athens, from circa 350 B.C. Votives were donated as expressions of gratitude by those who believed themselves cured by Asclepius. They were left in the *asclepeia*, the sanctuaries where the god warded off disease. The sick underwent a process of incubation, curing through sleeping in the god's sacred precinct. After a pilgrimage to the sanctuaries they were cared for by the servants of Asclepius, the *therapeutae* (from which the term "therapeutic" derives). They lay on divan-like beds called *kline* (the origin of the term "clinical"). During their sleep the god would cure them or prescribe curative procedures. Their stay in the sanctuary could last for months, and when recuperated, the patients would leave a donation.

Tholos. This housed the sacred non-venomous snakes used in healing.

Abaton. The portico where patients would undergo their curative incubation.

Temple of Asclepius. Here the chryselephantine (gold and ivory) statue of Asclepius was worshipped.

PART OF ASCLEPIUS'S SANCTUARY IN EPIDAURUS. THE FAME OF THE SHRINE, DEDICATED TO THE HEALER GOD OF ANTIQUITY, BROUGHT HUGE PROSPERITY TO THE CITY-STATE IN THE FOURTH CENTURY B.C.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

The Faith Healers

Sanctuaries emerged dedicated to the Greek god of medicine, Asclepius. Said to be the son of Apollo, he was a benevolent and compassionate god who cured patients through his divine intervention. Driven by faith and the promise of miracle cures, the sick flocked to his sanctuaries from far and wide. Their treatment included purification rites such as baths and prayers, but by far the most important practice was incubation. This involved sleeping overnight on the floor of the sacred precinct where the divine voice of Asclepius would advise or even heal the patient in their dreams.

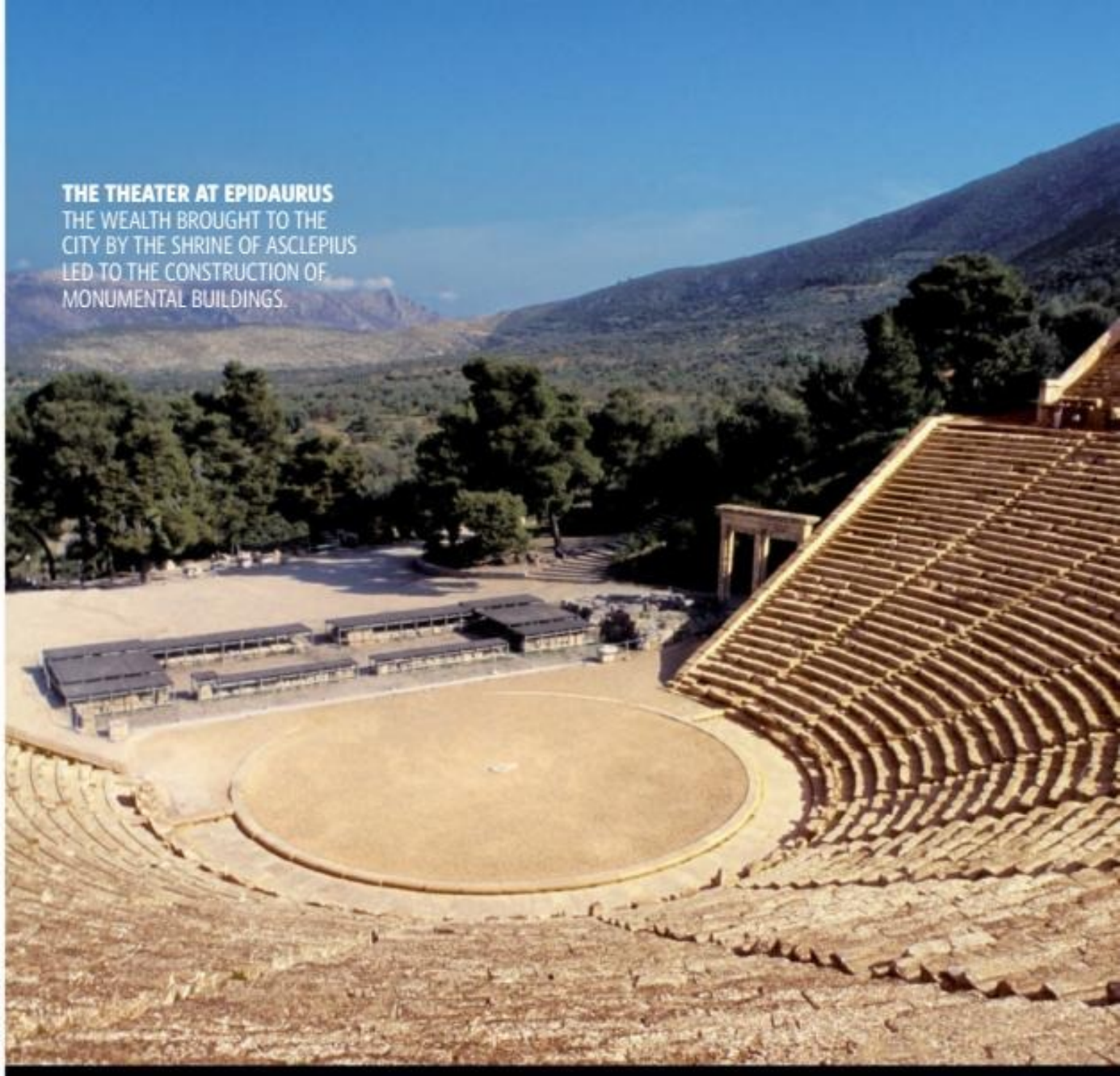
It seems to have had some success. The fame of Asclepius's cult grew and his sanctuaries expanded in the fourth century B.C. and especially during the Hellenistic period, after Alexander the Great. The extensive ruins of some sanctuaries are a testimony to the wealth generated there. The theater at Epidaurus, seating 13,000 spectators, was built thanks to the prosperity brought to the city by the sanctuary. Inscriptions on the votive offerings made by hundreds of patients testify to the many miracle cures believed to have been performed by the god.

Despite such superstitious practices it seems the priests of Asclepius were largely on good terms with Hippocratic doctors. Indeed they may have directly cooperated with them, referring patients who they considered incurable. However, some doctors objected to faith healers, magicians, and medicine men. The author of a treatise on epilepsy called *On the Sacred Disease* considered them to be charlatans and impostors.

An Ethical Profession

Learning medicine in ancient Greece involved a close personal relationship between the master and his disciple. This helps explain the importance of the Hippocratic oath, in which Hippocrates lays out a doctor's duties toward his master, his master's family, and his patients. The trainee solemnly swore the oath in the name of Asclepius and his daughters Hygeia and Panacea. He vowed to respect his master as a father, to share his possessions with him, to look after and protect his master's family, and to teach medicine only to his own offspring and to his master's disciples and children. He also promised to follow specific professional rules: Not to give poison or abortive medicines to anyone (even if requested), not to reveal a patient's secrets, to refrain from sexual relations in a patient's home, and not to perform surgery unless he was a specialist.

Hippocratic doctors were very mindful of the doctor-patient relationship. They believed that if patients were confident and in good spirits this would help speed their recovery. They also cared a lot about their own prestige; keeping the oath would help them build a good reputation, especially important as there were no official qualifications for practicing medicine by which they could otherwise prove their competence. Instead they had to earn the respect of



THE THEATER AT EPIDAURUS THE WEALTH BROUGHT TO THE CITY BY THE SHRINE OF ASCLEPIUS LED TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF MONUMENTAL BUILDINGS.

SOUMILLARD/GTRES

A HEALTHFUL LIFESTYLE

THE PRIESTS at Asclepius's sanctuaries prescribed more than medicines for their patients. They considered diet, baths, massages, and physical exercise as being of prime importance, and patients experienced a mix of such treatments during their stay. The numerous offerings made to Asclepius, effectively a payment of medical fees, guaranteed extensive facilities at the sanctuary, which housed up to 160 guest rooms.

MEDIEVAL MEDICINE

Galen's works remained essential medical texts for over a thousand years. In an edition from the Renaissance (below) a doctor and assistant tend to a rich patient.

BPK/SCALA, FLORENCE

THE SNAKES AND THE GOD

Hygeia sits next to her father, Asclepius, feeding one of the nonvenomous snakes that became the emblem of the god of medicine.

ERICH LESSING/ALBUM

their patients. Trust was essential—especially as fees were a matter of negotiation. Reputation was so important that doctors were even advised not to compromise themselves by agreeing to treat patients who were sure to die. Under the oath, doctors treated both free people and slaves, though Plato noted an important distinction: Free people should be informed of their ailments' causes, but slaves need only be given instructions and medicines.

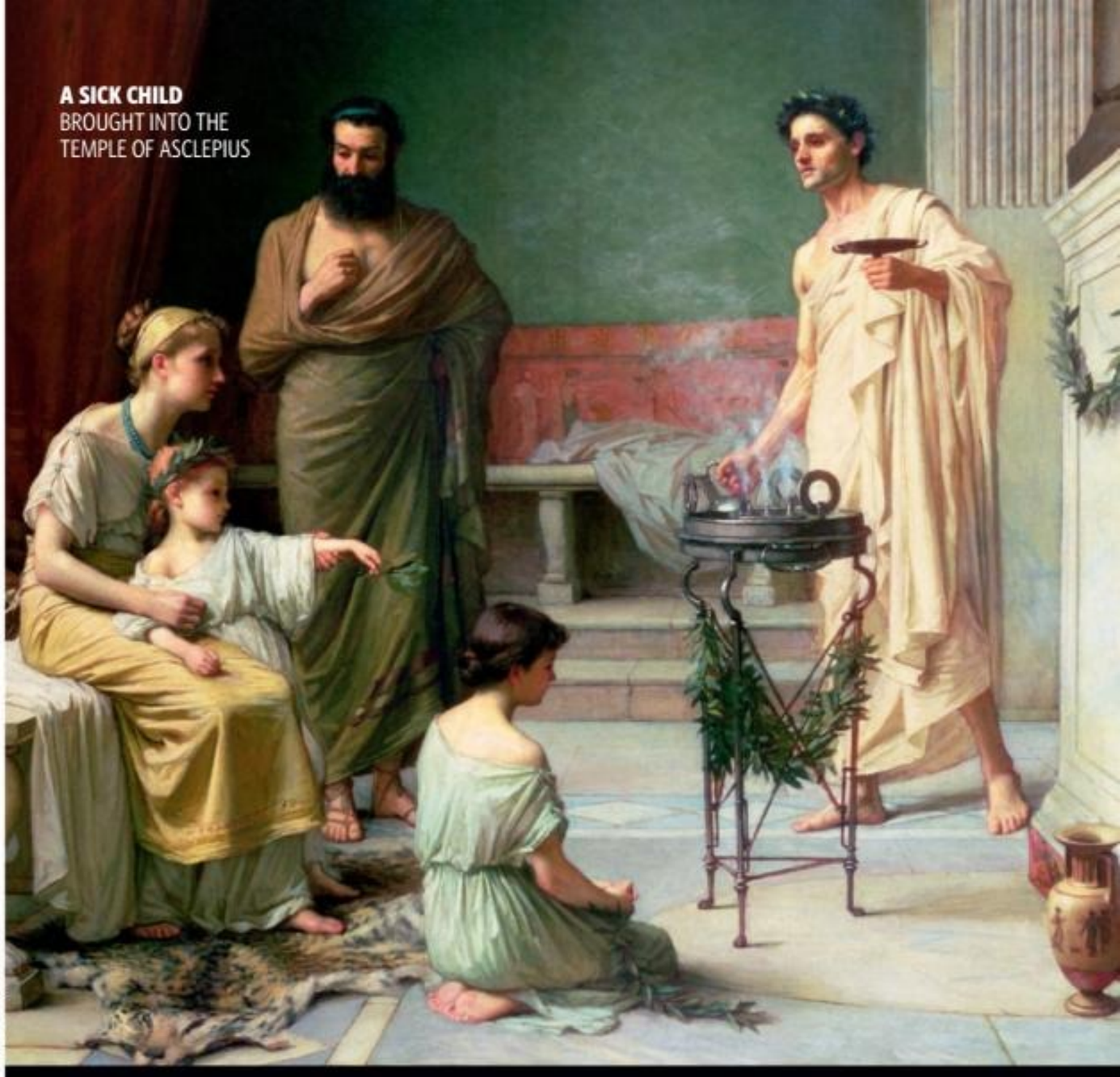
Hippocrates did not actually sign any of the works in the *Hippocratic Corpus*, but many of them bear the stamp of his school on Kos. A few texts were written at a rival medical school on the neighboring island of Knidos. They may even have collaborated on works, and so thought it inappropriate to sign the texts. The only work whose author we know was *On the Nature of Man* by Polybus, Hippocrates' son-in-law. This treatise is famous for a theory that tends to be attributed to the entire Hippocratic school: the four humors. It proposes that there are four liquids in the body: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. Having too much or too little of any humor adversely affected your health and required treatment to restore the balance.

The Good Doctor Galen

About a century later Greek medicine entered a new phase, as Alexandria became the center of Mediterranean medical excellence. At the Museum of Alexandria Herophilos of Chalcedon and Erasistratus of Ceos gained unprecedented knowledge of anatomy and the nervous system. Their analysis built on the studies of Aristotle, credited with inventing comparative anatomy. However, while religious sensibilities restricted the Greeks to cutting up animals, mainly pigs and monkeys, in Alexandria it was permitted to dissect human bodies. Doctors even cut open condemned criminals, while they were still alive, in an effort to better observe how the blood and internal organs worked.

In Alexandria and Rome medical schools emerged with various philosophical foundations, including methodics, empirics, pneumatics, and eclectics. However, these were all superseded by the work of Galen of Pergamum. Living in the second century A.D., Galen wrote many medical books and enjoyed an immensely successful career that included being physician to several Roman emperors, such as Marcus Aurelius and Septimius Severus. Galen's name became synonymous with good medical practice, and for centuries afterward his teachings were transcribed, discussed, and applied by Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and Christians. Even so, the great advances in medical science made after the 16th century, especially chemistry, pharmacy, and surgery, make ancient Greek medicine seem primitive. However, its role in rationalizing medicine was of vital importance to the development of effective medical care and an achievement that cannot be underestimated. ■

CARLOS GARCÍA GUAL
GARCÍA GUAL IS A RENOWNED AUTHOR OF BOOKS ON THE SOCIETY OF ANCIENT GREECE.



A SICK CHILD BROUGHT INTO THE TEMPLE OF ASCLEPIUS

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

IN SEARCH OF LOST HEALTH

A VOTIVE OFFERING from Epidaurus describes the sort of miracle cure many hoped for. A man came with "his legs paralyzed, he was brought to the temple on a stretcher and could only walk with the aid of sticks. When he went to sleep . . . he dreamed that the god prescribed him a four-month stay at the temple, as he would get better during that time. Once those months were over, he left cured, walking unaided."

Learn more

BOOKS
Greek and Roman Medicine
Helen King, Bristol Classical Press, 2001.

GREEK MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE

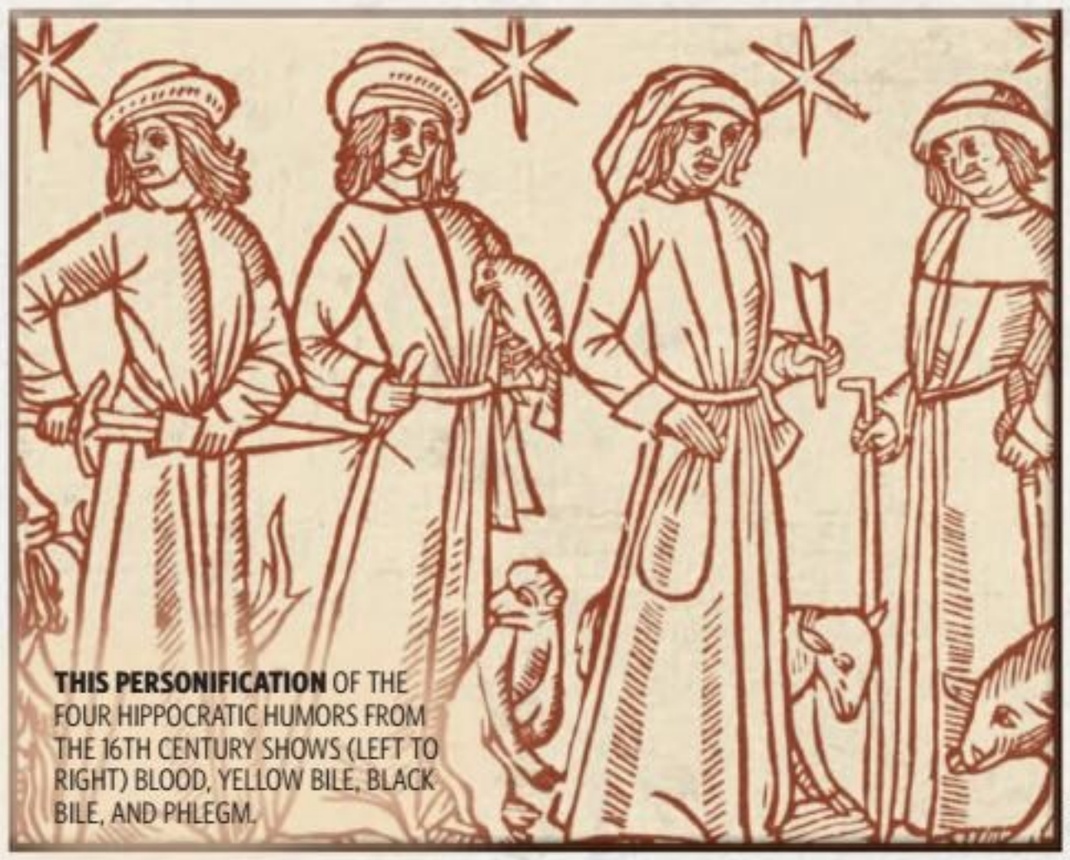
Although later science would correct many inaccurate ideas about how the human body works, Greek doctors used a wide range of resources to diagnose diseases, prevent illnesses developing, and cure the sick. They would treat patients with medicinal plants and had no qualms about performing delicate surgical operations.

VOTIVE RELIEF OR GRAVE GOOD (LEFT) FROM A DOCTOR'S TOMB. SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS CAN BE SEEN AT THE TOP. THIRD TO FIRST CENTURY B.C.

BPK/SCALA, FLORENCE

MEDICINAL PLANT FROM A PERSIAN EDITION OF DIOSCORIDES' *DE MATERIA MEDICA*

AKG/ALBUM



THIS PERSONIFICATION OF THE FOUR HIPPOCRATIC HUMORS FROM THE 16TH CENTURY SHOWS (LEFT TO RIGHT) BLOOD, YELLOW BILE, BLACK BILE, AND PHLEGM.

ALBUM

The four bodily humors

In the second century A.D. Galen expanded the Hippocratic theory of four humors: blood was wet and hot; phlegm, wet and cold; yellow bile was dry and hot; and black bile was dry and cold. Galen believed that an imbalance in these fluids was what caused disease. This was countered by administering opposing remedies: if the body was hot and running a fever then the patient would be given cold food and drink and other therapies.

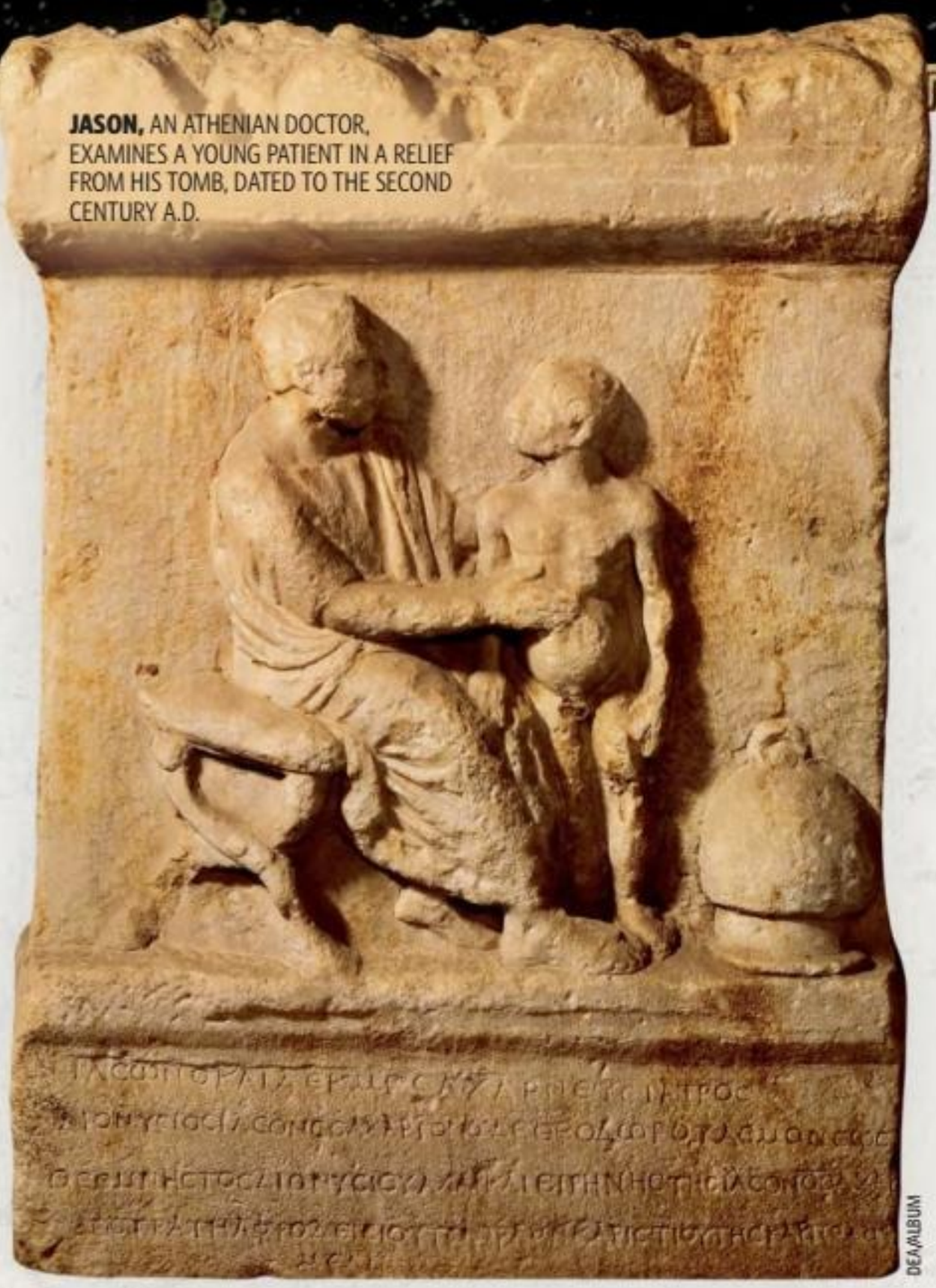
Pregnancy and childbirth

Soranus of Ephesus (second century A.D.) is the founder of scientific gynecology and obstetrics. He wrote *On Midwifery and the Diseases of Women,* which deals with menstruation, conception, pregnancy, childbirth and its complications, as well as the care of newborns. However, his description of the female reproductive system contains inaccuracies.

DEA/ALBUM

Beneficial plants

In the first century A.D. Dioscorides wrote *De Materia Medica*, the foremost classical work on botany. In it he describes nearly 600 plants and their medicinal effects, relating their healing properties to the four humors. He said of chamomile: "The roots, flowers, and leaves help warm the body and reduce weight if they are drunk or taken in sitz baths. They promote menstruation and expel the embryo as well as stones and urine . . . they are taken boiled to combat cystitis."

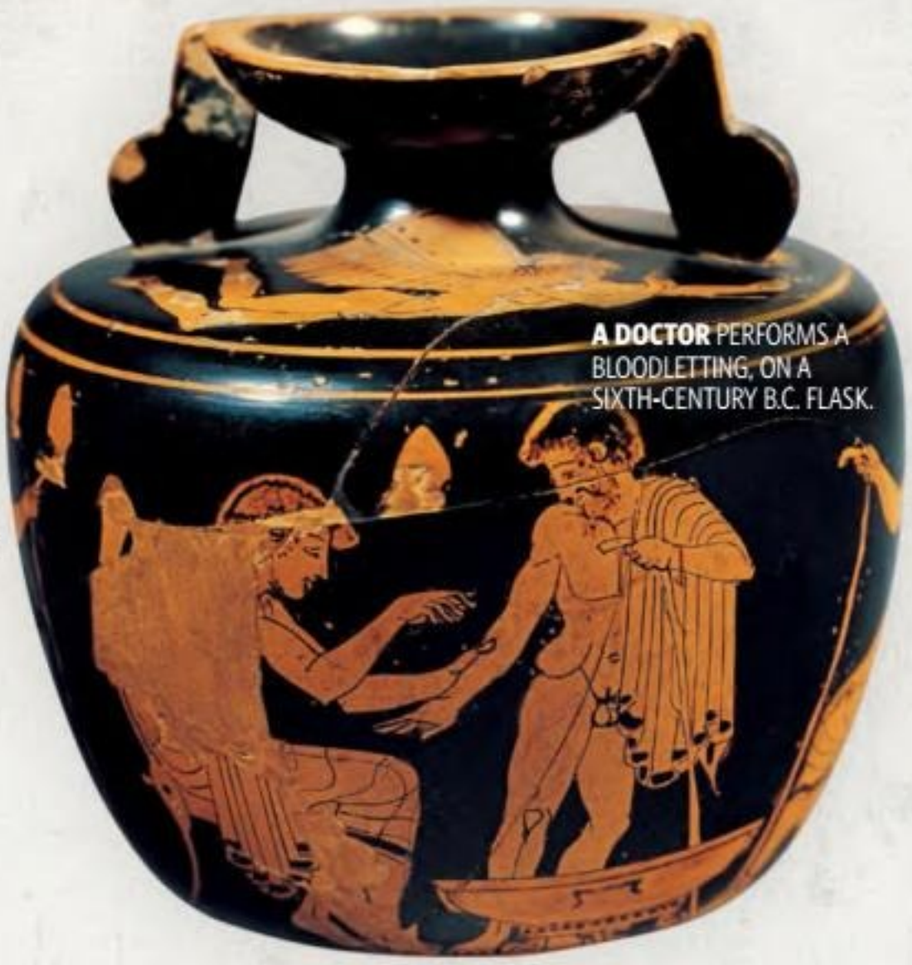


JASON, AN ATHENIAN DOCTOR, EXAMINES A YOUNG PATIENT IN A RELIEF FROM HIS TOMB, DATED TO THE SECOND CENTURY A.D.

DEA/ALBUM

Diagnostic methods

Doctors carefully examined their patients to produce a diagnosis. They observed aspects of the skin, as well as the color and consistency of the urine and feces; they noted the patients' coughing, breathing and bowel sounds, and listened to their chests.



A DOCTOR PERFORMS A BLOODLETTING, ON A SIXTH-CENTURY B.C. FLASK.

DEA/ALBUM

Surgery

Doctors carried out innovative operations: Asclepiades of Bithynia (124-40 B.C.) carried out the first tracheotomy, and in the first century A.D. Aulus Cornelius Celsus described facial plastic surgery and the first known amputation in an attempt to stop gangrene.

EXPEDITIVE TREATMENT OF A DISLOCATED VERTEBRAE IN AN ILLUSTRATION FROM THE *PERI ARTHRON.*

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

CHILDBIRTH ON A DELIVERY CHAIR. RELIEF ON THE TOMB OF A MIDWIFE, ISOLA SACRA NECROPOLIS, OSTIA

Bones and tendons

Fixing dislocated bones and fractures was a common demand made on Greek doctors, and the *Treatise On Joints*, attributed to Hippocrates, explains some key principles. Apollonius of Citium mentions this work in 90 B.C. His comments were preserved and were included in a Byzantine illuminated manuscript from the first century B.C., which is the oldest illustrated surgical treatise still in existence today.

This bronze statue by Denis Foyatier depicts Spartacus as an idealized revolutionary leader. Possibly a deserter from the Roman army, he was forced to become a gladiator, fighting to the death like those in the third-century mosaic (opposite).

R. OJÉDA/RMN-GRAND PALAIS

AKG/ALBUM

SPARTACUS

One in three people in the Roman Republic were slaves. Denied freedom and rights, subject to mistreatment and abuse, they were suppressed by fear and force. But when united, armed, and inspired by a courageous leader, they proved as deadly a threat to Rome as any foreign foe.

ESCAPE TO SICILY

The Greek theater of Taormina, in Sicily, the island to which Spartacus probably intended to escape. This agricultural center had a history of slave revolts and would have proved a strong base for the fugitive army.

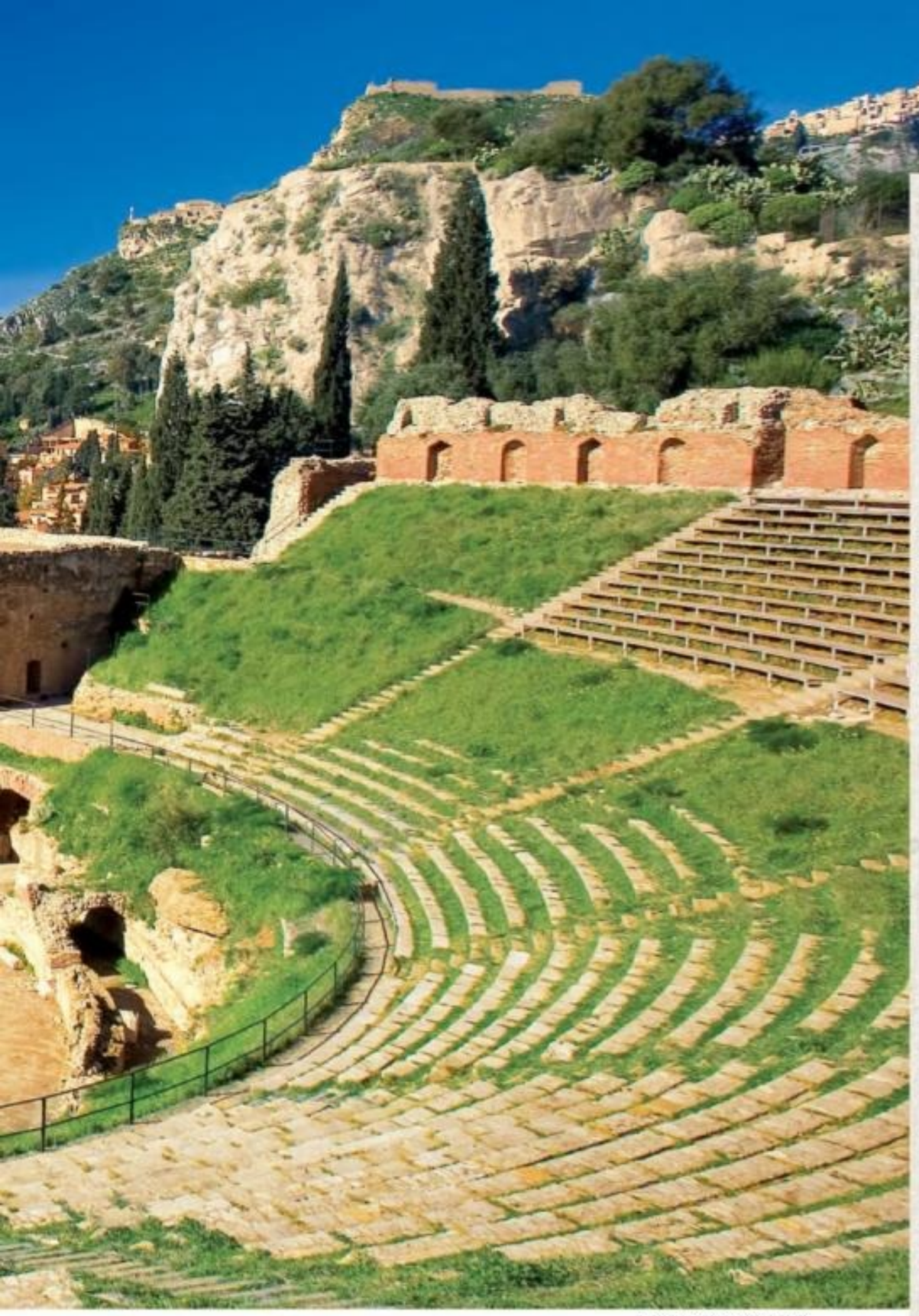
A Thracian slave sleeps fitfully while waiting to be sold in Rome. A serpent is seen coiled around his head. The slave's wife, "a kind of prophetess, and one of those possessed with the Bacchanal frenzy," interprets this unsettling sign, explaining that formidable power awaits the sleeper, but his final fate is unhappy. Although the name of this prophetic woman has long been lost, that of the sleeping slave has endured for all time: Spartacus.

Plutarch, the Greek-born historian and biographer, provides this richly symbolic detail in his account of the man who became the most famous slave in history. The sign of the serpent signifies that Spartacus is close to the gods; the reference to Bacchus, a deity associated with liberty, is appropriate for the story of someone who would fight for and win the freedom of thousands of slaves—albeit in a hard and short-lived liberty, much as the prophecy suggests.

The legend of the rebel slave was recorded by Greek and Roman authors, and it is their voices, not Spartacus's own, that have passed into posterity. Of the rebels themselves, and of their direct experiences, no record has survived. Indeed the accounts we have are generally brief and often contradictory, driven by the sympathies and motivations of their authors. The treatment of Spartacus falls broadly into two camps. He is admired and idealized by Plutarch and the Greek historian Appian of Alexandria, although the latter does include many less appealing aspects of Spartacus's personality. In the other camp we find historians Livy, Florus, and Orosius, who are all uncomplimentary about the slave warrior. They depict the revolt as nothing more noble than banditry, seeing it as a threat to public order and republican stability that needed to be swiftly crushed.

A School for Killing

Spartacus's revolt began in a gladiatorial school in Capua, near the modern-day city of Naples. All of its gladiators were slaves, and most were Gauls from modern France and Belgium or Thracians from an area around modern Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey. They were being trained to fight in

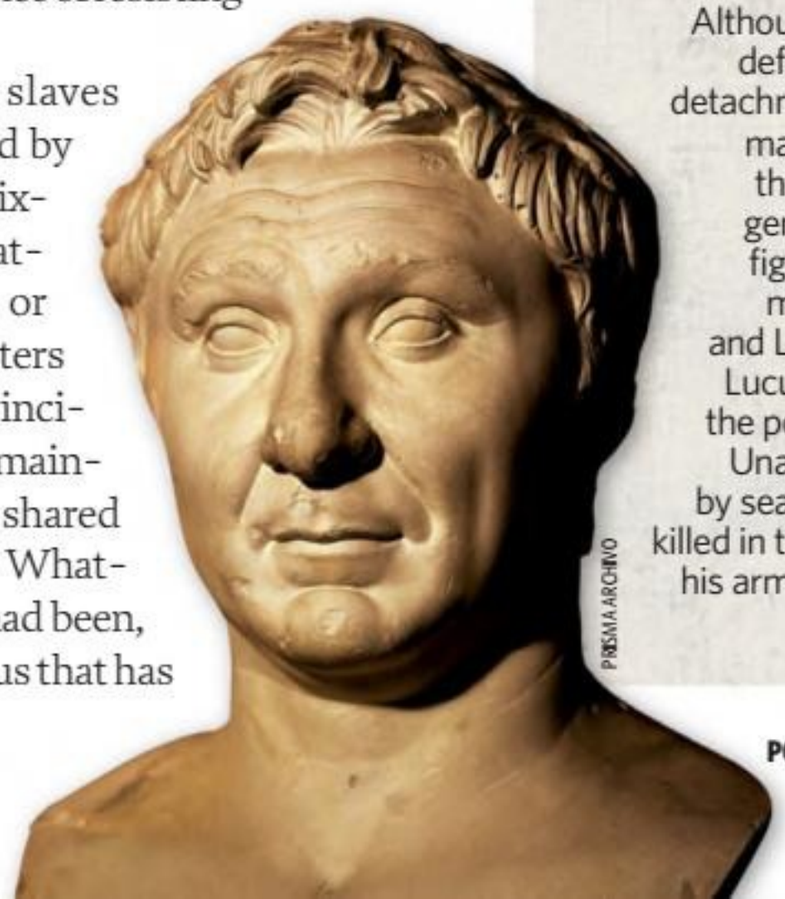


CUBO IMAGES/CORDON PRESS

the arena for the entertainment of bloodthirsty crowds. For most this meant a short, terrifying life followed by an agonizingly brutal death.

In the spring or summer of 73 B.C. around 200 of these unfortunate slaves plotted their escape. Although their plans were betrayed, as many as 78 managed to break out, armed with knives and spits from the kitchen. While on the run, the fugitives chanced upon some carts transporting gladiatorial weapons. Pillaging their contents, they stood a fighting chance of resisting recapture.

The small group of slaves appears to have been led by three men: Spartacus, Crixus, and Oenomaus, the latter two probably Gauls or Celts. Some ancient writers say Spartacus was the principal leader, while others maintain that authority was shared equally in a triumvirate. Whatever the arrangements had been, it is the name of Spartacus that has



PRISMA ARCHIVO

POMPEY IN AN 18TH-CENTURY BUST

One Gladiator, Seven Generals

Spartacus led his followers north and south across the Italian Peninsula, battling with the Roman army and defeating them every time. It took treachery and the combined forces of three armies to finish off both Spartacus and his fight for freedom.

PHOTOMSA

ROMAN MILITARY INSIGNIA WITH THE EAGLE OF THE LEGIONS

73 B.C.
Spartacus and some comrades escape from the gladiatorial school in Capua. After routing the troops of Caius Claudius Glaber on Mount Vesuvius, they move on to defeat the army of Publius Varinius.

AKG/ALBUM

CRASSUS, AFTER DEFEATING SPARTACUS, WAS APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF SYRIA.

72 B.C. (spring)
Spartacus beats the consuls Lucius Gellius Publicola and Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Clodianus. In the north of Italy, Gaius Cassius Longinus also tastes defeat at the hands of the seemingly invincible slave army.

72 B.C. (autumn)
Spartacus decides not to cross the Alps and marches back to southern Italy. The Roman Senate, humiliated by so many defeats, entrusts the legions to the command of Gen. Marcus Licinius Crassus.

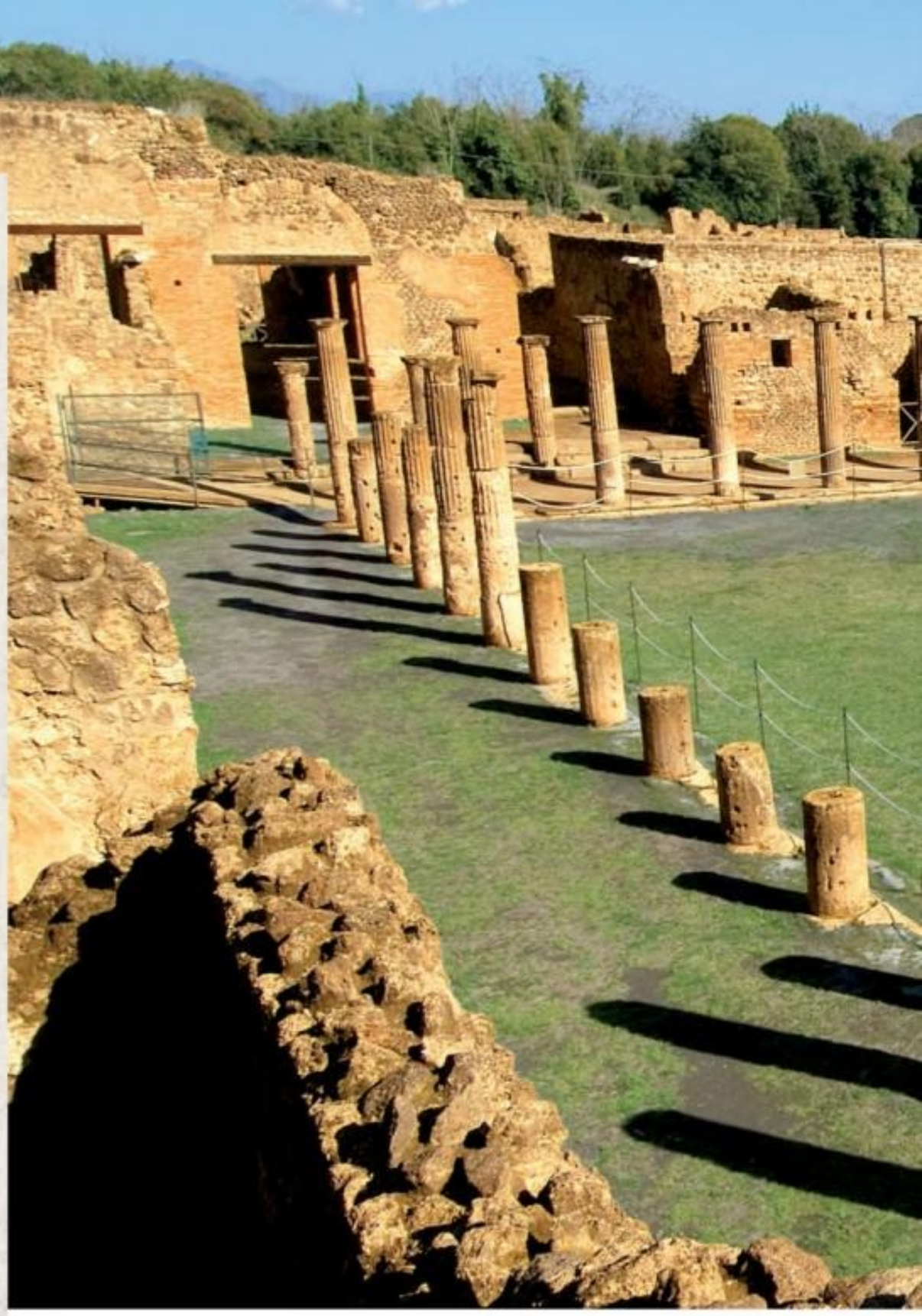
71 B.C.
Although Spartacus defeats a Roman detachment, Crassus manages to trap the rebels. Rival generals join the fight as Pompey marches south and Lucius Licinius Lucullus occupies the port of Brindisi. Unable to escape by sea, Spartacus is killed in the battle, and his army is defeated.

70 B.C.
Six thousand captured slaves are crucified along the road to Rome. The senate grants Crassus an ovation instead of a full triumph, but—flouting the republic's laws on appointment—he is made consul along with his rival Pompey.

Cross the Alps or Pillage Italy?

Spartacus's decision to march up the Adriatic coast, and then double back to the south of Italy, intrigued and puzzled ancient writers as much as it has baffled contemporary historians.

SOME HAVE SURMISED that there was a rift in the revolt's leadership. Crixus has been presented as a man interested only in plunder and revenge, wanting to remain in Italy to carry out a campaign of looting. Spartacus, supposedly a man of loftier ideals, wanted to cross the Alps out of Italy so that his Gallic and Thracian comrades could return to their homelands. This fit the Roman notion that barbarians were moved by a general love of freedom. It also resonated in the Roman mind because the great Carthaginian general Hannibal had heroically crossed the Alps to invade Italy during the Punic Wars. Many Romans drew parallels between the two leaders, both of whom had dangerously challenged Rome on its own ground. Some historians today doubt that Spartacus ever had any intention of crossing the Alps, and that this was an invention of later Roman authors to give a greater symbolic meaning to the slave revolt.



prevailed for striking real fear into the heart of the late Roman Republic.

Little is known of Spartacus's personality. Plutarch imagines him as a man of strength, intelligence, and culture, in the style of a Greek hero. Appian is less flattering and draws attention to Spartacus's sacrifice of 300 prisoners to avenge the death of Crixus, his execution of prisoners to free up his army as it marched, and his crucifying a Roman prisoner during the siege of Reggio.

Accounts of his early life also differ. Appian claims that Spartacus was a Roman soldier until he was imprisoned and sold as a gladiator. Florus, another chronicler, reports that Spartacus was a Thracian mercenary, then a soldier, a deserter, a bandit, and finally a gladiator. If Spartacus had served in the ranks of the Roman army, his knowledge of its military strategy might have given him a very dangerous advantage in the battles that followed.

The Roman historian and politician Sallust makes a favorable moral distinction between Spartacus and his followers: the leader himself was a man of refinement who struggled to curb

ETHEL DAVIES/AGE FOTOSTOCK

the excesses of his slave army. Whereas Crixus is portrayed as having a perverse, slavish nature from birth, Spartacus is presented positively as a man who was not born to be a slave.

These very different accounts demonstrate how the Romans were torn between celebrating Spartacus as a noble hero and condemning him as a lowly bandit. Since slaves were considered lesser beings, it was shameful for Romans to fight them, and a huge dishonor to be bested by them. Therefore, a Spartacus who threw off his slavish mantle to assume true nobility made him a more fitting adversary for the Roman army, helping to restore some of its badly battered pride.

Smashing the Legions

After escaping Capua the slaves sought rural isolation on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius. The core of Spartacus's followers were fellow gladiators from the school, but their ranks were soon swelled by fugitive slaves and the oppressed local peasantry. The large estates and farms of southern Italy employed a huge slave workforce that was ripe for revolt. Indeed the whole region was still in a state of tension following the Social War (90–89 B.C.), when it had confronted Rome to protest its unequal treatment, assert its rights, and become a full member of the republic.

The fact that Spartacus distributed all plunder in equal parts was a strong incentive for many impoverished or dissatisfied freemen to join his ranks. However, no city ever pledged him support, and Spartacus's followers would always be slaves, deserters, and the lowest born. It was a combination of factors that would contribute greatly to his defeat.

Against the rebels assembled on Mount Vesuvius the Romans dispatched 3,000 soldiers under the command of Caius Claudius Glaber. He laid siege to the mountain and concentrated on monitoring the slaves' only descent route. However, on the heights above, the besieged forces had discovered wild vines, which they plaited into makeshift ropes, using them to descend from a more rugged, undefended side of the mountain. The Romans found themselves outflanked by a surprise attack and were forced to retreat. Their abandoned camp was then

A BRUTAL TRAINING

The arena in Pompeii (above) is similar to the one in Capua where Spartacus and his rebellious comrades trained for long hours. Gladiators lived in tiny cells and were subjected to harsh punishments for disobedience.

SLAVES: THE OPPRESSED MASSES

A MASSIVE MARKET FOR HUMAN GOODS

IN THE SECOND AND FIRST CENTURIES B.C. the Romans developed the slave trade on a huge scale. Rome's victorious generals swept across the Mediterranean region capturing thousands of prisoners. These were sold wholesale to slave handlers at public auctions. The slave handlers took their human merchandise to Rome and other cities, where they were bought by citizens. Owning slaves was not confined to the rich: It is estimated that by the end of the Roman Republic slaves made up around one-third of the population.

SALE OF A SLAVE IN ROME, IN A 19TH-CENTURY OIL PAINTING

NO RIGHTS AND NO LEGAL FAMILIES

DURING THE REPUBLIC slaves were given the same consideration as beasts of burden: They were the property of their master, who could sell them, punish them, and even kill them without answering to anyone. Slaves could not hold property or have a family—at least not a legally recognized one—although cohabitation was permitted. Inscriptions suggest that *vernae*, children born of slaves, were often regarded as more loyal to their master, having been born in his home.

SLEEPING SLAVE CHILD, FIRST CENTURY B.C.

EXPLOITATION ON THE GREAT ESTATES

SLAVES PUT TO WORK ON A FARM were known as the *familia rustica*. Their tasks varied from agricultural labor to the production of textiles to construction work. Some tasks were backbreaking, and the worst jobs were often assigned as a punishment, for example, working on the treadmills or deep in the mines. All slaves worked under the supervision of a *vilicus*, an overseer slave who had earned the trust of his master.

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS AT A ROMAN VILLA

A GLADIATOR'S WEAPONS

It is believed that Spartacus fought as a *murmillo*, a type of gladiator who wore a helmet similar to the one below, from the first century A.D. He also carried a short sword and a shield.

PHOTOAISA

captured by the triumphant mob of rebel slaves.

Inspired by this victory, many more now flocked to fight for Spartacus, whose forces swelled to between 70,000 and 120,000 men. With these, the rebel leader now routed another Roman army, led by Publius Varinius. So far Spartacus had faced hastily assembled and poorly prepared Roman forces. Rome had not treated the revolt as a proper war but as an outbreak of common banditry. That now changed.

Recognizing that the problem required a drastic solution, the senate dispatched a strong force under the consuls Lucius Gellius Publicola and Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Clodianus. Arrogance again got the better of them. The consuls saw the slaves as little more than wild beasts to be hunted down and destroyed, and so they opted for a tactic of encirclement. Gellius marched south to cut off the rebels who were heading toward Sicily. His plan was to drive them north to where Lentulus awaited them. Near Cape Gargano, in Apulia, Gellius's legions attacked rebels led by Crixus: he and 20,000 slaves were killed.

Rome's Worst Nightmare

The consuls next faced Spartacus himself, and he proved a far greater challenge. The former gladiator defeated one after the other, forcing them into a humiliating retreat. Spartacus sacrificed some 300 Roman prisoners in memory of the slain Crixus. He then marched north to Modena, where he defeated the soldiers of Gaius Cassius Longinus. Now within striking distance of the Alps and a better chance of freedom, Spartacus decided to march south once more.

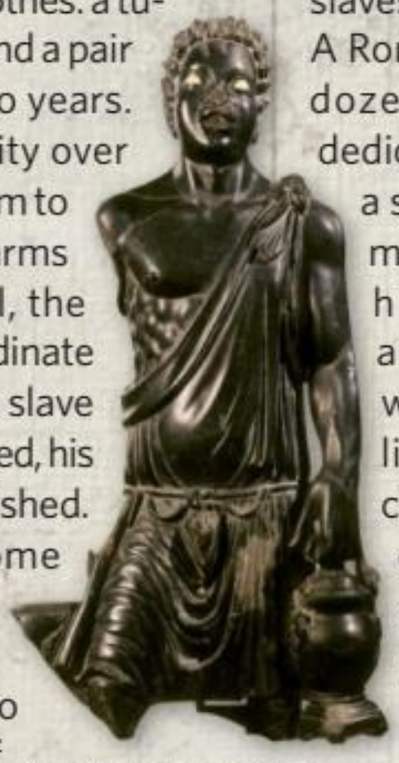
Some sources suggest his men preferred to stay and plunder Italy rather than cross the mountains. Perhaps the settlements of the Po Valley—its peasantry wealthier and freer than in the south—showed little interest in joining or aiding his rebellion. Perhaps bad weather and food shortages prompted Spartacus once more to seek the support of the south.

Whatever the reason, as the slave army approached Rome, the citizens panicked, traumatized by tales of a similar advance toward the capital by Hannibal in the Second Punic War, around 150 years before. The rebels, however,

WHO KEPT ROME RUNNING

SUBJECT TO THEIR MASTER'S WHIMS

THE MASTER PROVIDED THE SLAVES with food and the bare minimum of clothes: a tunic every year, and a cloak and a pair of wooden clogs every two years. He exercised total authority over them, and could subject them to any type of punishment. Farms were equipped with a cell, the ergastulum, where insubordinate slaves were chained up. If a slave attacked his master or escaped, his fellow slaves would be punished. One story relates that some 400 slaves were executed because they had not come to the aid of a landowner who was being attacked by one of their number.



BLACK SLAVE, A MARBLE SCULPTURE FOUND IN ASIA MINOR

SKILLED TO SERVE THE HOUSEHOLD

COMPARED TO FAMILIA RUSTICA, domestic slaves had a much more comfortable life. A Roman upper-class home might have dozens of slaves, each dedicated to carrying out a specific task for their master and members of his family: makeup artists, hairdressers, wet nurses, teachers, litter-bearers, musicians, and even readers. However there are examples of gatekeepers, *ostiarii,* kept on chains by the door as if they were guard dogs.

SERVANT, IN A FRESCO FROM A VILLA IN POMPEII

THE GRIM FATE FOR THOSE WHO RAN AWAY

IF A SLAVE ESCAPED, THEIR OWNER WOULD use any and all means necessary to recover his property. Professional slave hunters were often contracted, and announcements would be posted with a description of the fugitive. If he were ever recaptured, he would likely be whipped almost to death and condemned to work in the mines. The letter F, for *fugitivus,* would be branded on his forehead, and he might be forced to wear a dog collar stamped with the following: "I have run away. Capture me. If you return me to my master . . . he will reward you."

SLAVE COLLAR, NATIONAL ROMAN MUSEUM.

LEFT TO RIGHT: BRIDGEMAN/ACI, PRISMA, ART ARCHIVE, ART ARCHIVE, PHOTOASIA, SCALA FLORENCE

lacked the resources to besiege the city, so they marched around it. Spartacus had demonstrated pragmatic caution in the face of his hotheaded subordinates' thirst for looting and revenge.

Until now the rebel's victories were due largely to numerical superiority, guerrilla tactics, and the poor preparation of the armies they faced. The cream of the Roman military was abroad at that time: Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus—better known as Pompey—was fighting in Hispania (Spain) while Lucius Licinius Lucullus was in Anatolia (Turkey). Desperate to end the run of humiliating defeats, Rome entrusted supreme command to one general—Marcus Licinius Crassus.

This extremely rich politician had very personal reasons for quashing the slave rebellion, not least that it was grievously disrupting the commerce and farming on which his wealth was based. Furthermore, Crassus' great rival, Pompey, was expected to return from Spain in triumph at any moment. Crassus sorely needed a military victory to reinvigorate his standing in Roman politics. Fighting runaway slaves hardly seemed glorious, but with Spartacus being compared to Hannibal, a victorious Crassus would be likened to Scipio, the great Roman general who defeated Hannibal in 202 B.C. In fact, the braver Spartacus was, the more glory awaited the man who could defeat him.

A Race for Military Glory

Crassus had to move fast if he was to win sole credit for defeating Spartacus. He sent his legate, Mummius, ahead with orders to track the slave army's movements. Mummius exceeded his orders, attacked, and was shamefully defeated. Crassus felt the need to assert his authority and motivate his army. His chosen method was decimation, executing every tenth man in a unit of 500 soldiers. The measure was brutal but effective. With iron discipline restored to the legions, Crassus was ready to face the slave army himself.

Spartacus withdrew to Reggio in the south of Italy. It is likely he intended to cross the short distance across the strait to the island of Sicily, but the Cilician pirates whose ships he was going to use betrayed him to the Romans. Crassus managed to encircle the rebel army, building a system

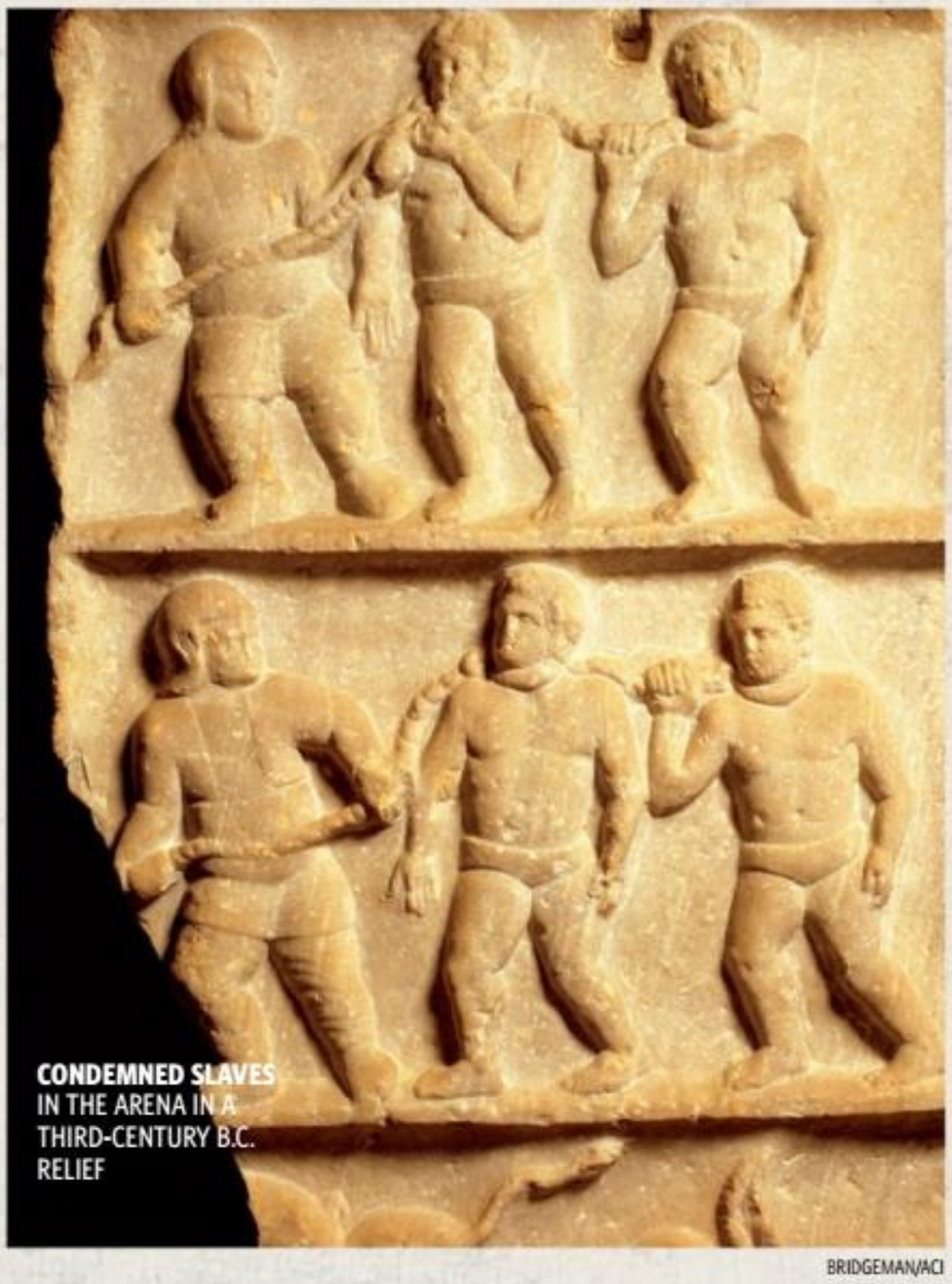
Gladiators not only faced their comrades in the amphitheater, but also it was customary to see them fighting exotic beasts, as demonstrated in this bas relief in the National Roman Museum.

ERICH LESSING/ALBUM

From Slaves to Kings of Sicily

During the classical period the island of Sicily had important cereal plantations and cattle ranches on which many slaves were forced to work. Their massed concentration and generally poor conditions made the island ripe for slave revolts.

HARSH CONDITIONS on these plantations, and the punishment and abuse to which the slaves were subjected, had triggered a major revolt between 135 and 132 B.C. Its leader was a slave named Eunus, a seer and miracle worker with a magnetic personality. He declared himself king, took the name Antiochus, and even minted his own coins. Beyond securing their personal freedom, the slaves did not set out to create a new social order, instead simply copying the institutions of Greek monarchies. The kingdom was short-lived, ending with the capture of Eunus and his death in prison. However, from 104 to 100 B.C. a second revolt took place. Salvius, its leader, was proclaimed king. This rebellion ended with a thousand slaves being sent to Rome. They were condemned to fight wild beasts but committed suicide rather than accept the fate decreed by their Roman masters.



CONDEMNED SLAVES IN THE ARENA IN A THIRD-CENTURY B.C. RELIEF

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

of fortifications near Reggio. But Spartacus was not so easily contained, and, taking advantage of a night of snowstorms, he broke through the cordon. At this critical moment the Roman Senate ordered Pompey and Lucullus to join the battle. Pompey marched south, while Lucullus disembarked his troops at Brindisi.

Reluctant to allow the Romans to force his army back into a disadvantageous position, Spartacus turned to fight Crassus. Plutarch recounts that before this battle Spartacus called for his horse. "When his horse was brought him, he drew out his sword and killed him, saying, if he got the day he should have a great many better horses of the enemies," and if he lost he would "have no need of this." It is possible Spartacus made this dramatic gesture to spur on his men, but it can also be interpreted as a ritual sacrifice to win the favor of the gods. If so, it was not enough.

Plutarch describes the heroic last stand and death of the gladiator and slave leader: "Making directly toward Crassus himself, through the midst of arms and wounded, he failed to find him, but slew two centurions that had fallen upon

CANALI PIETRO/FOTOTECA 9X12

him. At last being deserted by those around him, he himself stood his ground, and, surrounded by the enemy, bravely defending himself, was cut in pieces."

The victorious Crassus ordered the crucifixion of 6,000 recaptured slaves: They lined the Appian Way from Capua to Rome. Even so, Crassus found himself trumped by Pompey, who had managed to kill an additional 5,000 rebels, and so seize the lion's share of the glory. An infuriated and frustrated Crassus did not dare request the triumph awarded for the greatest victories: He was forced to make do with an ovation, a lesser ceremony where the general paraded on foot.

Liberator or Bandit?

It has been suggested that the slave revolt was far less important than the idealized accounts of Plutarch would have us believe. It is argued that it amounted to nothing more than a series of skirmishes by a loose network of dispersed bands of escaped slaves bent on looting, under the command of different chiefs over which Spartacus had some level of overall control. According to this view, it was later Roman historians who embellished the Spartacus story for reasons of politics and propaganda. Yet for almost three years the slave army evaded and defeated Rome's arrogant and ill-conceived efforts to suppress them. Only when the Roman military machine really stepped up to the challenge was Spartacus and his rebellion snuffed out. Whether we see Spartacus as a heroic liberator or a common bandit, it was the revolt's lack of a clear, overall objective, its failure to win support from the cities, and the inexhaustible resources of the republic that doomed the dreams of victory for the slaves who defied Rome.

FERNANDO LILLO REDONET
LILLO IS THE AUTHOR OF SEVERAL BOOKS ON GLADIATORS, GREEK AND ROMAN HEROES, AND THE FALL OF TROY.

A GREAT SPECTACLE

Gladiatorial combat was hosted in amphitheaters all over the Roman Empire, such as the Colosseum in Rome (above). It was completed in A.D. 80, a century after the death of Spartacus.

Learn more

BOOKS

Spartacus and the Slave Wars
Brent D. Shaw, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001.

Spartacus: The True History of Rome's Greatest Hero and the Third Servile War
Patrick Kelly, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012.

THE LORD OF THE MONGOLS

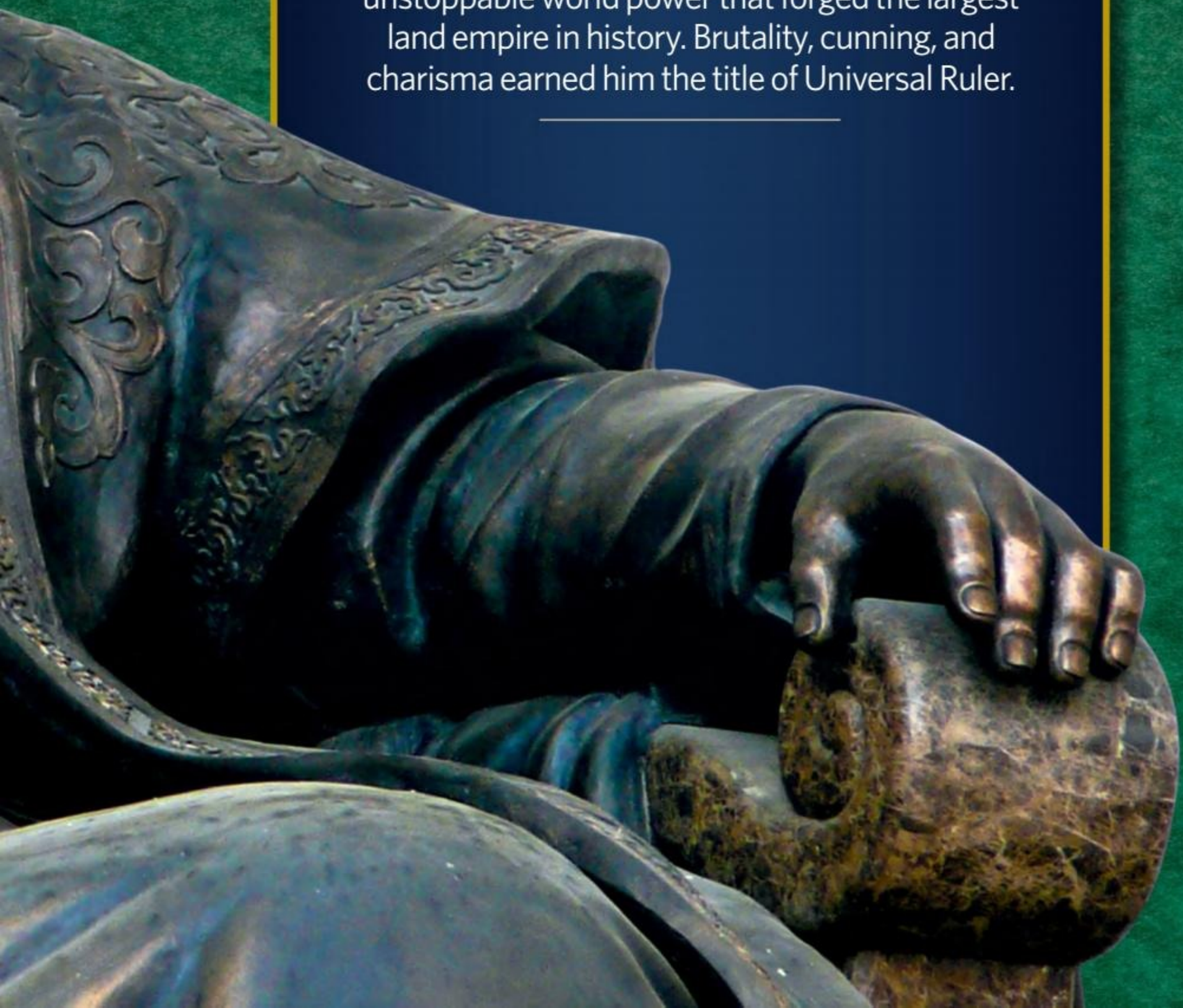
In 1206 Temüjin was elected lord of all the steppe nomads with the title Genghis Khan. This statue of him stands in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

CONQUEROR OF EMPIRES

GENGHIS KHAN

From a childhood of starvation on the steppes, he went on to unite the Mongol tribes into an unstoppable world power that forged the largest land empire in history. Brutality, cunning, and charisma earned him the title of Universal Ruler.



The Mongol armies led by Genghis Khan executed one of the largest military expansions in history. The scale of their success is almost unbelievable. In just 20 years they conquered most of northern China and Central Asia. Sweeping inexorably outward from the steppes, within a few years they threatened countries as far apart as Hungary, Egypt, and Japan.

The explosive Mongol expansion of the early 13th century seems hard to explain at first. It's true that nomadic herders were formidable warriors: Their lifestyle had made them excellent horsemen and archers while exposure to a harsh climate had inured them to the deprivations of military life. However, no other nomadic steppe people ever proved anywhere near as successful as the Mongols. Nor did the Mongol armies enjoy any significant technological advantage over their predecessors. In fact, their principal weapon, the small but powerful composite bow, was only a minor improvement on the bows used by the Scythians more than 2,000 years earlier. There was also nothing new in the way the Mongol army was organized. It fought in units of 10, 100, 1,000, and 10,000 men, a system adopted by Mongolia's Xiongnu empire in the third century B.C. and used by many nomadic peoples ever since.

The one decisive element that sets the Mongols apart is the figure of Genghis Khan. Born Temüjin, Genghis Khan—the title, given to him in 1206, means Universal Ruler—was undoubtedly one of the best generals of his time and rightly considered to be one of the greatest military leaders ever. He is a towering historical figure whose personal charisma, courage, determination, intelligence, cunning, and ruthlessness go a long way to explaining the phenomenal and far-reaching success of his armies.

Brains, Brawn, and Loyalty

Genghis Khan's conquests include two of the most powerful states of the time: the Jurchen empire of China and the Khwarazmian empire of Central Asia. In pitched battles he won a string of victories: against the Xi Xia kingdom (1209); against the Jurchen in Fuzhou (1211), in Xijiang (1212), and in Yizhou (1213); and against the Khwarazmians in present-day Pakistan (1221).

At the same time, ancillary Mongol armies inflicted at least half a dozen more major defeats on their enemies. The talented subordinates who commanded these forces, Jebe, Subedei, and Mugali, to name a few, were indicative of a crucial factor in Genghis Khan's success: meritocracy. His army was built on talent, its leaders picked for their personal abilities rather than their political, traditional, or hereditary affiliations. In this way Genghis Khan established a large cadre of very able officers to which he could delegate with complete confidence.

For not only were these men skilled commanders, they were also fiercely loyal to their leader. Jebe, a former enemy, had actually shot at Genghis Khan's horse, or perhaps

MICHAUD/AKG/ALBUM

A harsh steppe life made the nomads excellent horsemen and archers.

SKILL ON THE STEPPES AN ARCHER FIRES BEHIND HIM IN A 15TH-CENTURY OTTOMAN MINIATURE

MICHELE FALZONE/AWL IMAGES

FROM RAGS TO RICHES AND EMPIRE

CIRCA 1167

Temüjin is born into a noble family, but his father's murder plunges him into destitution. He must survive by his wits.

1206

After decades of warfare, Temüjin unites the tribes under his command. He is given the title Genghis Khan, or Universal Ruler.

1209

The Mongols defeat the kingdom of Xi Xia, in northwestern China. It is ruled by the Tangut, who become Mongol vassals.

1219

Genghis Khan attacks the Khwarazmian empire after the ambassadors he sent to the court of Mohammed are killed.

1227

The Great Khan dies, possibly from injuries suffered in a fall from his horse. His final resting place remains a mystery.

WHITE IMAGES/SCALA, FLORENCE

GENGHIS KHAN IN HIS TENT. A MINIATURE FROM THE 14TH-CENTURY *COMPENDIUM OF CHRONICLES,* BY RASHID AL-DIN

THE DEVASTATION OF BUKHARA

The 16th-century Mir-i-Arab madrassa in Bukhara (Uzbekistan). In 1220 the Mongols overwhelmed Bukhara's 30,000-strong garrison and sacked the city, a key trading post on the lucrative Silk Route.

BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS/BRIDGEMAN/ACI

GENGHIS KHAN IN COMBAT

The Mongol sovereign sends his enemies fleeing in this scene from Rashid al-Din's *Compendium of Chronicles* (left).

IN DEFENSE OF CHINA

Chinese kingdoms built walls as protection against nomadic raiders. The section of the Great Wall (right) was built by the Ming dynasty in the 15th and 16th centuries.

KIMBERLY SUE WALKER/AGE FOTOSTOCK

even the rider himself, during a battle. But the conqueror appreciated talent wherever he found it, and he pardoned Jebe, who became a trusted Mongol general. Genghis Khan's legendary charisma not only won over enemies but also secured the unconditional devotion of his men. One story tells that after a confusing battle against the Tayichiuds, a Mongol tribe that refused to recognize his leadership, Genghis Khan was left lying on the battlefield with a serious neck wound. He was rescued by a Mongol warrior named Jelme, who insisted on watching over him all night and even managed to steal into the enemy camp to bring back mare's milk for his thirsty and badly injured commander.

Discipline or Death

Another crucial element of Genghis Khan's success was the strict discipline he imposed on his army. In 1202 he prepared to launch a punitive expedition against the Tatars, taking revenge for their murdering his father 40 years earlier. Addressing his troops, he issued this emphatic order: "If we are victorious, let no one take booty right then. It will be shared out later. If we must retreat, we will return to the starting point and, once we have formed again, we will attack with vigor. Anyone who fails to return to the formation will be decapitated."

It was an inspired directive, for it countered one of the main weaknesses of nomadic warfare. After winning a battle, victorious nomads would often stop to sack the enemy camp, allowing the defeated army to escape relatively intact. For Genghis Khan's men the spoils of war would have to wait until the job was done and the enemy was utterly eliminated.

Disobedience led to punishment, often inflicted en masse. Juan de Plano Carpini, a Franciscan monk who visited the Mongol Empire 18 years after Genghis Khan died, recorded how if any individual in a ten-man *arban* fled

SCALA, FLORENCE

The discipline imposed by Genghis Khan was one of the foundations of his military success.

MONGOL OR TIBETAN HORSE ARMOR, CIRCA 15TH CENTURY

CONFUSING THE ENEMY

MONGOLS: MASTERS OF DECEPTION

The Mongols fighting under Genghis Khan and his successors made extensive use of tricks, such as fooling the enemy into thinking they faced a much larger army than they really did. Several variations of this ruse were carried out by Mongolian forces.

1204: The night before the final battle for supremacy on the steppe, Genghis Khan ordered each of his men to light five fires. He hoped his enemy, the Naiman, would be demoralized by this illusion of a mighty army.

1220: Civilians captured in Bukhara were forced to stand before the walls of Samarkand and unfurl Mongol banners and standards. This convinced the city's garrison that the Mongols outnumbered them, when the opposite was true.

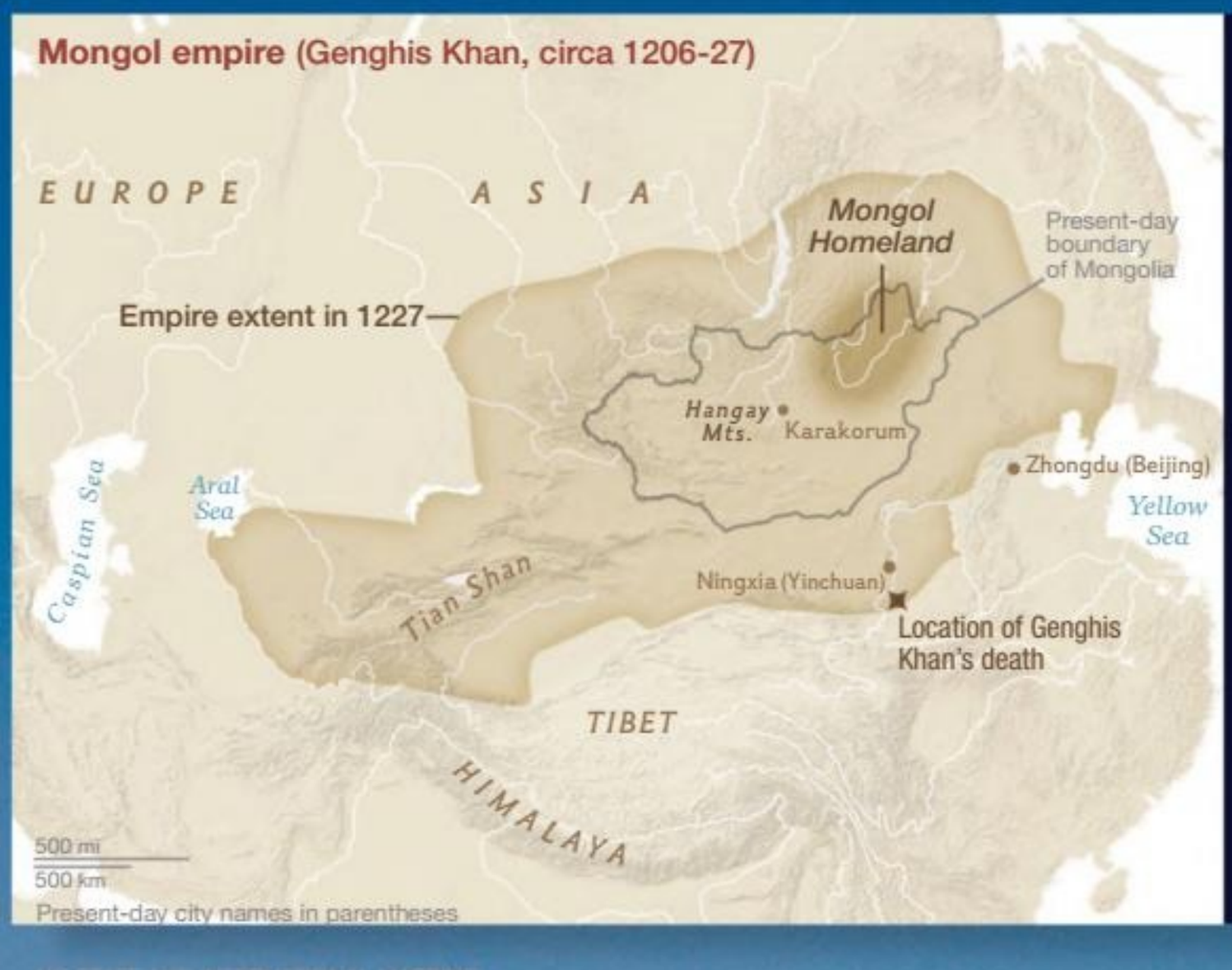
1221: In Afghanistan a Mongol force made dolls and mounted them on spare horses. Even if the foe was taken in by the trick, it did not help the steppe warriors this time: The Mongols (who on this occasion were not led by Genghis Khan) were defeated.

THE WEATHER WINDOW

A 2014 STUDY has shed new light on how the Mongols expanded during the time of Genghis Khan. By analyzing Siberian pine trees in central Mongolia's Hangay Mountains, the study revealed that between 1211 and 1225, the years of Genghis Khan's spectacular conquests, the climate in central Mongolia was more benign than at any time in the previous 1,100 years. Heavy rainfall and mild weather encouraged pasture growth, which in turn increased the number of cattle and war horses that were the basis of Mongol power. This contrasts with a period of drought during the 1180s and '90s, which had created conflicts among clans for control of pasture and water for their livestock.

A SEA OF GRASS
This steppe, at the foot of the Altay Mountains, is in Bayan-Ölgii, Mongolia's westernmost province. Traditional circular yurts are still used by Mongol nomads.

TUUL & BRUNO MORANDI/FOTOTECA 9X12



GENGHIS KHAN'S VAST EMPIRE

The Mongols burst onto history's stage when Genghis Khan unified a mosaic of nomadic tribes and launched them against the rich empires of China and Central Asia that bordered the steppe. The silk, gold, silver, and slaves they seized allowed the Mongols to consolidate their power, and their conquests continued after Khan's death. Divided between his descendants, the empire lacked unity. Khan's son Ogodei founded Karakorum, the Mongol capital, and the empire peaked under his grandson Kublai Khan, who completed the conquest of China.

VIEWSTOCK/AGE FOTOSTOCK

SWEEPING INTO CHINA

Dunes have reclaimed the ruins of a Buddhist shrine in Khara Khoto (left), once a city in Xi Xia, a kingdom the Mongols conquered in 1227.

in the midst of battle, he and all his comrades were executed. If an entire arban ran away, every man in the 100-soldier *yaghun* to which they belonged was put to the sword.

The Mongols were also unusually innovative and adaptable, proving more than willing to try out new strategies when faced with unfamiliar situations. This was most evident in siege warfare, the Achilles' heel of nomadic armies, which were skilled at swift maneuvers on the open field but ineffective at forcing walled cities to surrender.

The Mongols' first siege of a large fortified city did not go as planned. They attacked Ningxia, capital of Xi Xia, in 1209. Lacking any siege engines or technical knowledge, Genghis Khan's army attempted to knock down the city walls by diverting the waters of the Yellow River to undermine their foundations. The Mongols succeeded in making the river overflow, but it ended up flooding their own camp. However, this embarrassing miscalculation had an unexpected outcome. Their sheer effort and determination convinced the king of Xi Xia that it would be wiser to ally with the raiders than resist them. He became a Mongol vassal and sealed the deal by marrying one of his daughters to Genghis Khan.

It was while fighting the Jurchen in northern China that the Mongols mastered siege warfare. During their first campaign in 1211 they were only able to capture small or poorly defended towns through surprise attacks. But they were able to steadily augment their army with powerful siege engines, which they acquired by recruiting Chinese engineers, deserters who had the technical knowledge the Mongols needed.

Fighting with Fear

The most controversial aspect of Mongol warfare was the use of terror. Genghis Khan

AKG/ALBUM

SADDLE DECORATION SHOWING TWO HORSES. MONGOL WORKMANSHIP, CIRCA 1250

Siege warfare was the Achilles' heel of nomadic armies skilled at fighting on the open plains.

Quiver
Horsemen carried two quivers containing more than 60 arrows.

SOL 90/ALBUM

THE KHAN'S HORSEMEN

The Mongol army was made up almost entirely of mounted archers. These were far superior to the infantry that formed the bulk of armies in the more sedentary states that the Mongols preyed upon. The horse and archer combination delivered the advantages of speed, mobility, and range. It was also perfect for their preferred tactic: the feigned retreat. The Mongols would pretend to flee, inciting the enemy to break formation and chase them. Suddenly they'd stop (sometimes in a preplanned spot), regroup, and turn to attack their disorganized pursuers.

Helmet
Traditional felt hats were replaced with iron or leather helmets for combat.

Bow
The iconic recurved composite bow had a practical range of 160 to 650 feet.

Cuirass
The sleeveless vest-like armor was worn with a silk tunic underneath, making it easier to remove arrowheads from the body.

Saber
The Mongols preferred a curved blade that was ideal for cavalry combat.

Protection
Their vulnerable shoulders and forearms were sometimes protected by leather armor.

Saddle
A ration of raw meat was kept under the saddle, which would tenderize over time.

Bow holster
The holster was open at the top for rapid access to the bow.

Horses
These were similar to the Przewalski breed, being small, strong, fast, and very hardy.

Stirrups
These gave the riders support and allowed them to fire arrows while moving at speed.

WHISTLE ARROWS
The whistling sound, caused by air passing through the holes in the tip, was intended to terrify the enemy.

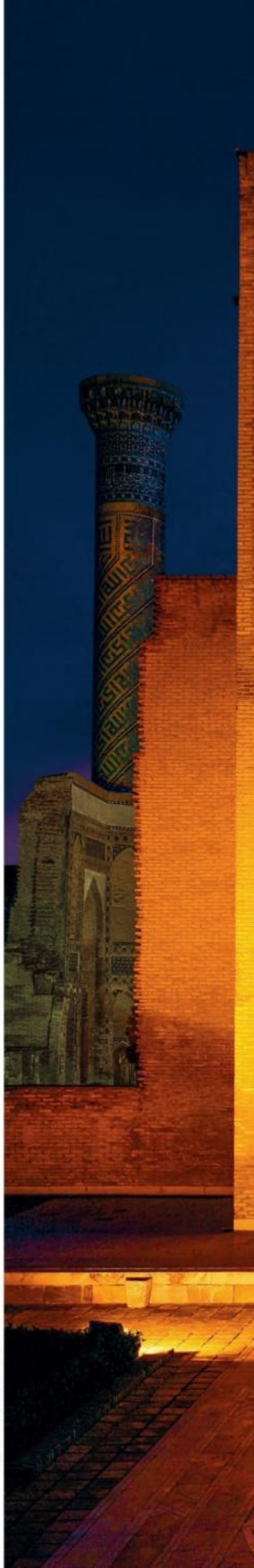
CULTURE-IMAGES/ALBUM

BATTLE OF THE KALKA RIVER

In 1223 the Mongols defeated a coalition of Russian principalities. They are said to have piled up the prisoners and celebrated by dancing on top of them (left, background).

SAMARKAND, JEWEL OF ASIA

In 1220 Genghis Khan conquered Samarkand. In the 14th century Tamerlane, the last great nomadic conqueror, made it his capital and is buried in its Gur-e Amir (right).



R. PHILIPS/ARCOIMAGE FOTOSTOCK

followed a premeditated policy of terror, spreading fear through brutal violence. This was not the wild behavior of bloodthirsty barbarians, but rather a coolly calculated tool to make conquests easier. And it worked. The more an area resisted, the more cruelly the Mongols treated the defeated population. Terrified survivors of their atrocities were allowed to escape and become the harbingers of doom, spreading word that resistance to the Mongol invader was both futile and foolish.

Genghis Khan was not the first to put a whole city to the sword, nor would he be the last. But it is argued that the scale of his murderous cruelty was unprecedented.

Some explanation can be found in the fact that the Mongol armies were always greatly outnumbered by the populations they conquered. This meant they could not allow themselves the luxury of leaving large garrisons to enforce order over problem peoples: it was simply safer and more effective to eliminate them. Such behavior seemed senseless to the states they conquered who viewed war as a means to seize wealth-producing workers. This was not the Mongol way, and the areas overrun by Genghis Khan's armies, especially in northern China and Central Asia, suffered the horror of having significant portions of their populations mercilessly exterminated.

Genghis Khan's campaigns are nevertheless impressive and constitute one of the largest military expansions ever seen. And his legacy was far more than an orgy of looting and brutality. Genghis Khan's military feats laid the foundations of a vast new empire for which he created an effective system of government. The Universal Ruler—sometimes also called Emperor of All Men—was adept at picking out, and using, talented officials who had already been serving in the lands he conquered, and leaving them in charge on his behalf. This, together with the very real fear of pitiless reprisal, held together Genghis Khan's ever expanding and disparate conquests. The result was that within a few short decades his grandson ruled over the largest land empire in history. ■

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Learn more

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A WEAPON OF WAR

HUMAN SHIELDS FOR A SIEGE

Learning the techniques of siege warfare from the Chinese allowed Genghis Khan to attack the fortified cities that often held the key to dominating a region or toppling a king. But siege warfare was heavy work and required vast amounts of labor to build earthworks, siege towers, and catapults, while filling in moats and digging tunnels to undermine city walls.

Solving this problem employed a method as simple as it was pitiless: They captured thousands of civilians from surrounding villages and forced them to work on the siege. Many were women and children, and when the time came to assault the walls, the Mongols often used these poor innocents as human shields.

Ingeniously this had the advantage of both lowering Mongol casualties and giving the defenders the terrible dilemma of having to kill their fellow countrymen, sometimes relatives or friends, or allowing the Mongols to reach the walls and take the city.

PUTTING CITIES TO THE SWORD,

THE MONGOLS USED CHINESE SPECIALISTS IN SIEGE WARFARE TO CONQUER THE CITIES. THIS IMAGE SHOWS THEM BESIEGING BAGHDAD IN 1258.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

THE MONGOLS' BRUTAL METHODS OF WARFARE CERTAINLY HAD A TERRIBLE HUMAN COST, BUT MUCH HAS LIKELY BEEN EXAGGERATED: CLAIMS THAT 1,300,000 PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN THE CITY OF MERV ARE NOT CREDIBLE. THE MOST GRUESOME ANECDOTES ARE ALSO PROBABLY FALSE, SUCH AS THE TALE THAT WHEN GENGHIS KHAN HEARD OF A NOBLEWOMAN WHO HAD SWALLOWED HER PEARLS TO HIDE THEM, HE ORDERED HIS MEN TO DISEMBOWEL ALL OF THE CORPSES, IN SEARCH OF OTHER HIDDEN VALUABLES.

▲ *Otrar, a desperate defense*

Inal Jan, the governor of Otrar (in present-day Kazakhstan), triggered a war by executing Mongol merchants accused of spying. The Mongols took the city in five months but Inal Jan held out for another month in the citadel. He ended up on the rooftop hurling tiles down on the Mongol soldiers ordered to capture him alive. Most of the city's inhabitants were killed, and Inal Jan was later executed in Samarkand.

Double massacre in Merv ▶

After the Mongols conquered Merv (the setting for *One Thousand and One Nights*), they divided the inhabitants into groups and executed them outside the city. Just 400 craftsmen were spared and sent to Mongolia as slaves. Some 5,000 inhabitants had managed to hide and, thinking it was safe, emerged when the Mongols left. However, the Mongol rear guard arrived and killed them all.

THE MONGOL CAVALRY PURSUE THEIR DEFEATED ENEMIES IN THIS MINIATURE FROM THE *COMPENDIUM OF CHRONICLES*.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

A BLOODY POLICY OF TERROR

IT WAS COMMON MONGOL PRACTICE TO DEPORT CRAFTSMEN FROM CONQUERED CITIES TO MONGOLIA. THIS MINIATURE IS FROM THE *COMPENDIUM OF CHRONICLES*.

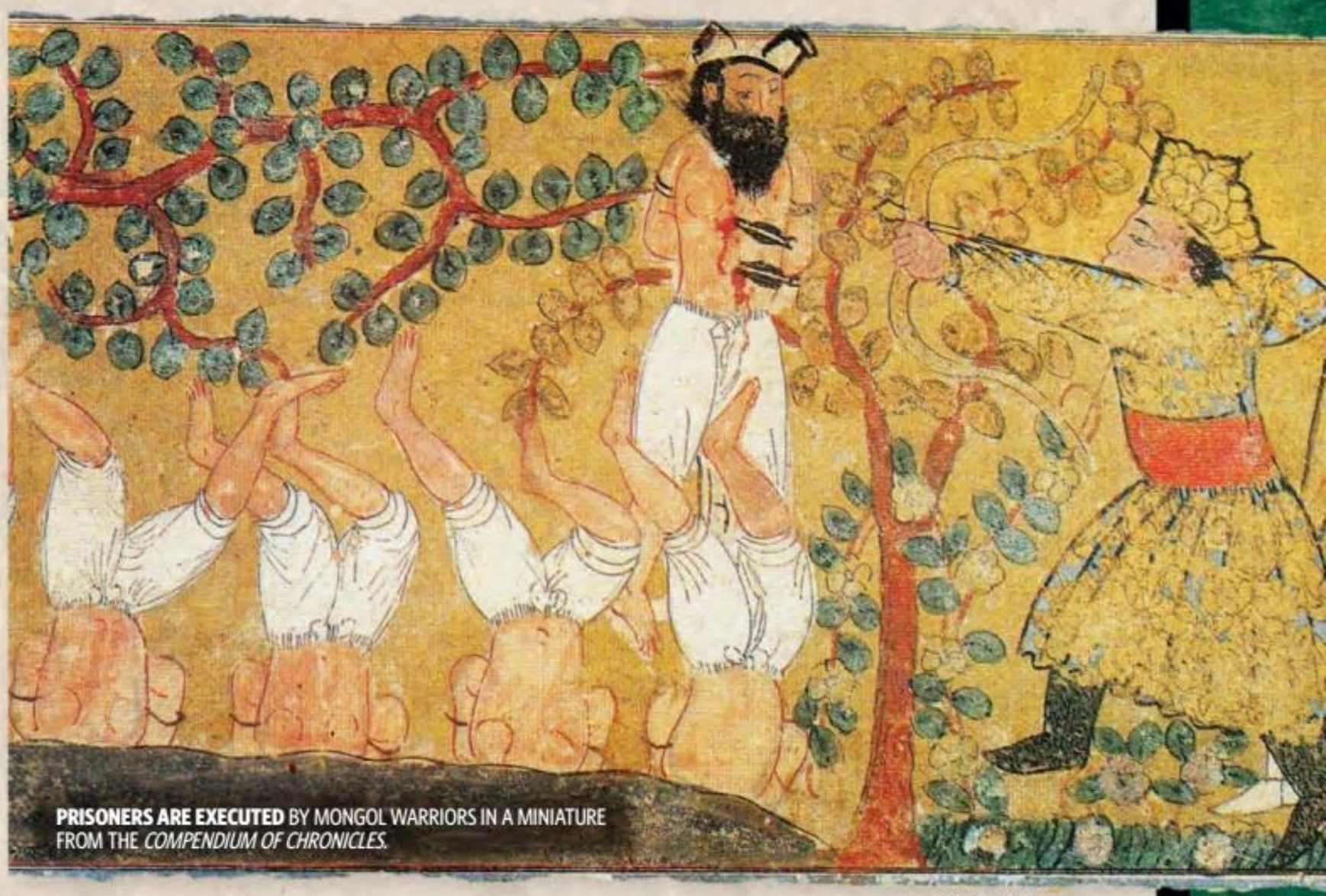
BRIDGEMAN/ACI

▲ *Defiance in Gurgandj*

Gurgandj, in present-day Turkmenistan, suffered a grueling six-month siege. The defenders resisted fiercely, and the Mongols were forced to fight house to house. In desperation they first set fire to the city and then flooded it by diverting a river. When the Mongols finally won, they killed all of Gurgandj's inhabitants except for the craftsmen, children, and young women, who they then enslaved.

Nishapur and Bamyan ▶

Two members of the Mongol imperial family died assaulting these cities: Tokuchar, Genghis Khan's son-in-law, in Nishapur, and Metiken, his favorite grandson, in Bamyan. The sieges then became a matter of family revenge, and if sources are to be believed, the Mongols put to death all of the inhabitants, and their dogs and cats as well, so that no living thing was left breathing in either city.



PRISONERS ARE EXECUTED BY MONGOL WARRIORS IN A MINIATURE FROM THE *COMPENDIUM OF CHRONICLES*.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

CHEROKEE

From the moment they met with Europeans, life began to change for the Cherokee. Their story is one of resistance and remarkable adaptations, as they fought to preserve their culture and independence while adopting Western ways.

Around 1540 the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto pushed into Cherokee country and was the first European to encounter these Native Americans. It was long believed they had built the large mounds found in their territory, but this is now thought to be unlikely.

JOHN BERKEY/NGS

At the end of the 17th century English and Scottish traders ventured more regularly into the almost uncharted southern interior of North America. Some of them began to trade with a unique group of Native Americans they referred to as the Cherokee. This was not a politically centralized Indian nation but a group of around 20,000 people living in about 70 towns across the mountains and valleys of the southern Appalachians. The Cherokee were united not by national affinity, but by kinship, a belief in common origins, a set of related dialects, a commitment to particular social institutions and ideas, and a distinct spiritual understanding of the universe. As these traders began to make their presence felt in the land of the Cherokees, they left a fascinating picture of how this tribe initially lived and how it tried to adapt to the new world the Europeans brought with them.

The Long Road to the Trail of Tears

1540
Hernando de Soto's expedition enters Cherokee country. This is perhaps the first time that the Cherokees have encountered Europeans.

1700s
Europeans begin making regular trips into Cherokee territory, bringing with them new trade goods, a new religion, and devastating new diseases.

1721-1819
In 35 cessions the Cherokee surrender almost all of their traditional territory to Great Britain, its colonies, and then to the United States.

1785
The Cherokee place themselves under United States protection in the Treaty of Hopewell. They are urged to adopt an Anglo-American lifestyle.

1808-28
The Cherokee adopt a bicameral legislature, court system, written legal code, republican constitution, and publish a Cherokee newspaper.

1835
Dissident Cherokees sign a treaty that dooms the whole nation to removal; in 1838-1839 the Cherokee depart for the Indian Territory.

1840s
The Cherokee settle their political differences, restore their national institutions, and reestablish their status as a separate, sovereign nation.

A TOWN BUILT FOR DEFENSE

Chota was described by an Englishman as having high cliffs on one side and "the other three sides trees of two foot or over, pitched on end, twelve foot high, and on the tops scaffolds with parapets."

COURTESY OF THE NORMAN B. LEVENTHAL MAP CENTER, BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY/RICHARD H. BROWN COLLECTION

According to Cherokee cosmology the *Ani'-Yun'wiya,* or the Principal People, as the Cherokee thought of themselves, lived at the center of a spiritually powerful universe that consisted of three levels. The domain of humans was a flat disk floating upon the surface of a great body of water. Above the human earth was the upper world, the home of supportive spirits and a place of harmony, peace, and purity. Below the human earth was the lower world of fertility, change, and danger. Monsters and ambiguous beings sometimes emerged from this underworld of springs, lakes, rivers, and caves. Every Cherokee had a part to play in keeping these three worlds in balance through rituals and institutions designed to preserve or restore stability. Disharmony, it was understood, could bring awful consequences from the spirit world.

A similar sense of responsibility extended to the environment. While Europeans considered the landscape something to be mastered and exploited, the Cherokee applied their social ethic of balance and harmony to their natural surroundings. This is not to say that they did not change

The Great Smoky Mountains are a subrange of the Appalachian Mountains rising along today's Tennessee—North Carolina border. In the 16th century the Smokies lay at the very heart of Cherokee territory.

DAVE KUEBLER/GETTY IMAGES

or even destroy nature—they felled and burned trees for new cornfields. Rather, they considered themselves participants in the natural cycle of change and understood that they played a role in ensuring natural equilibrium.

Cherokee land was held in common, with an individual's land belonging to the community, and the land of the community being available to those individuals who chose to use it. A family could build a home on any land that others were not using, and they then held rights to the buildings on that land. When they moved out, the land reverted back to the community and became available for the next person.

Society was structured around two fundamental forms of social organization: the clan and the matrilineal system of descent. The clan was a kinship group that traced its origin to a common ancestor in the distant past, and each individual claimed affiliation to one of seven clans. Clan membership and the rights to property passed down the matrilineal line of descent. The Cherokee were exogamous, meaning that individuals had to marry outside of their clan to avoid violating the serious taboo of incest. Though men and women were theoretically free to marry whomever they chose, they rarely did so without counsel from their clans.

Clan elders settled disputes among kin, whereas conflicts among members of different clans were resolved by the town council. When a disagreement turned deadly, the law of blood revenge provided a systematic way of restoring peace. This practice considered the killing of an individual, intentional or accidental, an offense against the victim's clan. The clan then had a legal right to exact lethal retaliation against the assailant or another member of his clan. There was also a spiritual significance to blood revenge: The soul of the deceased could not enter the spirit world in the west and would continue to haunt the living until it was avenged.

Issues involving the entire community were the responsibility of the town council, which consisted of the adult population of the town—men and women. Council meetings, held in a central council house, aimed at achieving a consensus after what could be a long period of

THE ANNUAL GREEN CORN CEREMONY

The first corn crop was welcomed with a major festival. Fasting and spiritual cleansing preceded a feast and dancing. A new sacred fire was lit, public areas cleaned, wrongs forgiven, and social harmony restored.

RICHARD A. COOKE/CORBIS/CORDON PRESS

discussion in which three groups held influence: the community's spiritual leaders, the clan elders, and the "beloved" men and women who had earned respect for their abilities, charisma, achievements, and wisdom. The council was responsible for peacetime administration and managed diplomacy, ceremonies, and public buildings. They meted out public punishments for transgressions of Cherokee norms, such as shaming for theft or cowardice in battle; ostracism for repudiating the community consensus; scratching of the skin for misbehavior by children and violating military orders; and in the most serious cases, such as witchcraft and arson, execution.

The Cherokee understood that war and peacetime required leaders of different skills and experience. When the town council decided to go to war, a special group of veteran warriors, typically known as the red council, assumed control over the whole town. Unlike European nation-states, the Cherokee did not fight to expand their territory, acquire wealth, or settle religious differences. Cherokee wars often began when young men set out to acquire social distinction; the resulting casualties prompted blood revenge, often leading to very long wars of vengeance.

When the warring tribes determined to make peace, negotiations were conducted by the civil or white council. This then reasserted its usual control over town affairs while warriors and their leaders returned to their normal status. This dual system of government subordinated the warrior class to the civil society, but ensured that the most effective leaders were in position to protect the community in time of conflict.

WAR MAKES THE MAN

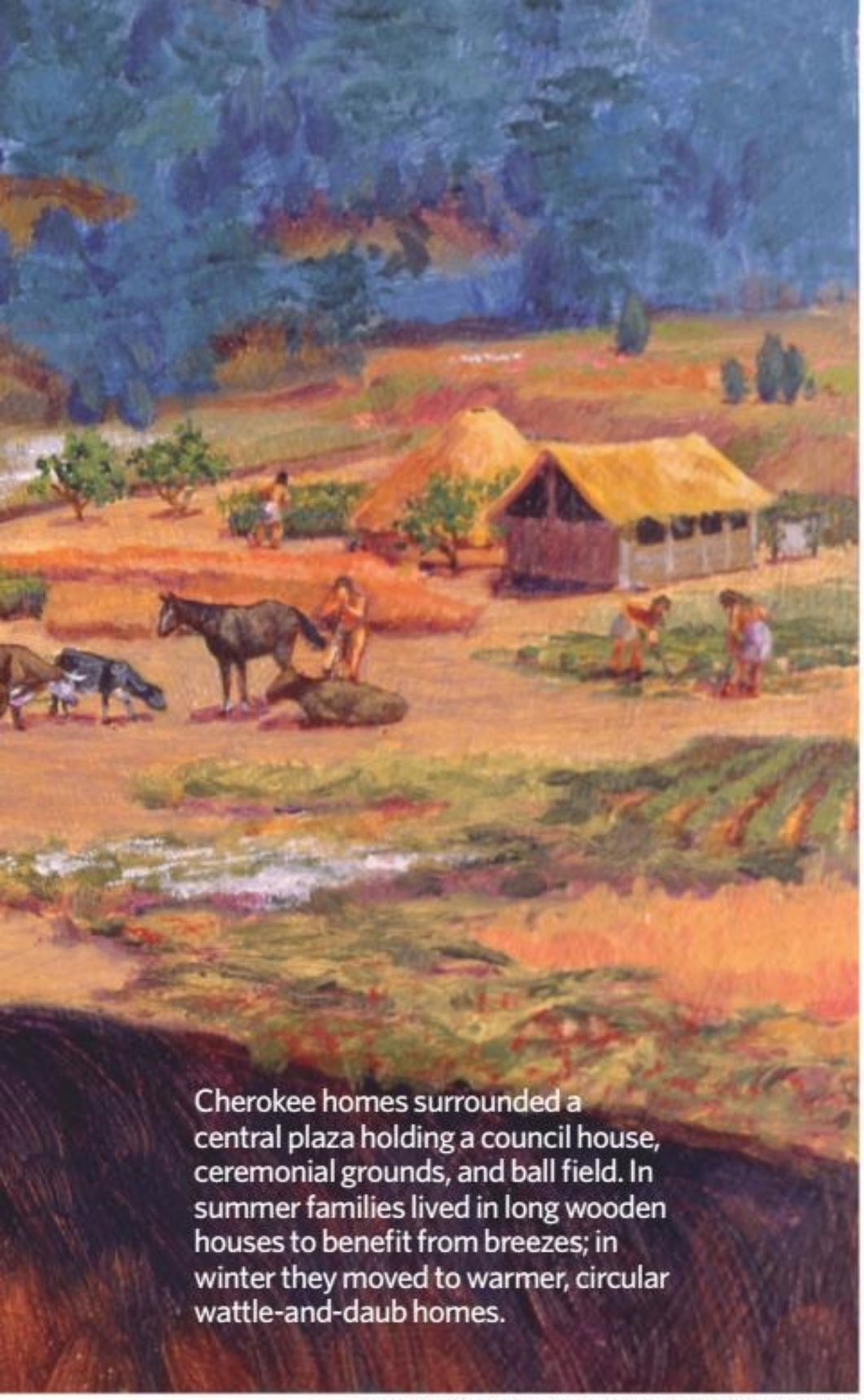
Tomahawks like these were their weapon of choice. In 1761 a European wrote: "War is their principal study and their greatest ambition is to distinguish themselves by military actions . . . Their young men are not regarded till they kill an enemy or take a prisoner."

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

QUAI BRANLY/SCALA, FLORENCE

The Settler Invasion

The arrival of European settlers transformed Cherokee civilization in almost every way. European microbes caused deadly pandemics that depleted the Cherokee population. British and American armies further decimated Cherokee communities and forced Cherokee governments to cede territory. New conditions of trade, new ideas about spirituality and lifestyle, and new technologies all challenged



Cherokee homes surrounded a central plaza holding a council house, ceremonial grounds, and ball field. In summer families lived in long wooden houses to benefit from breezes; in winter they moved to warmer, circular wattle-and-daub homes.

McCLUNG MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY AND CULTURE; ARTIST: CARLYLE URELLO

MARILYN ANGEL WYNN/NATIVESTOCK/SCALA, FLORENCE

HOMES AND GARDENS

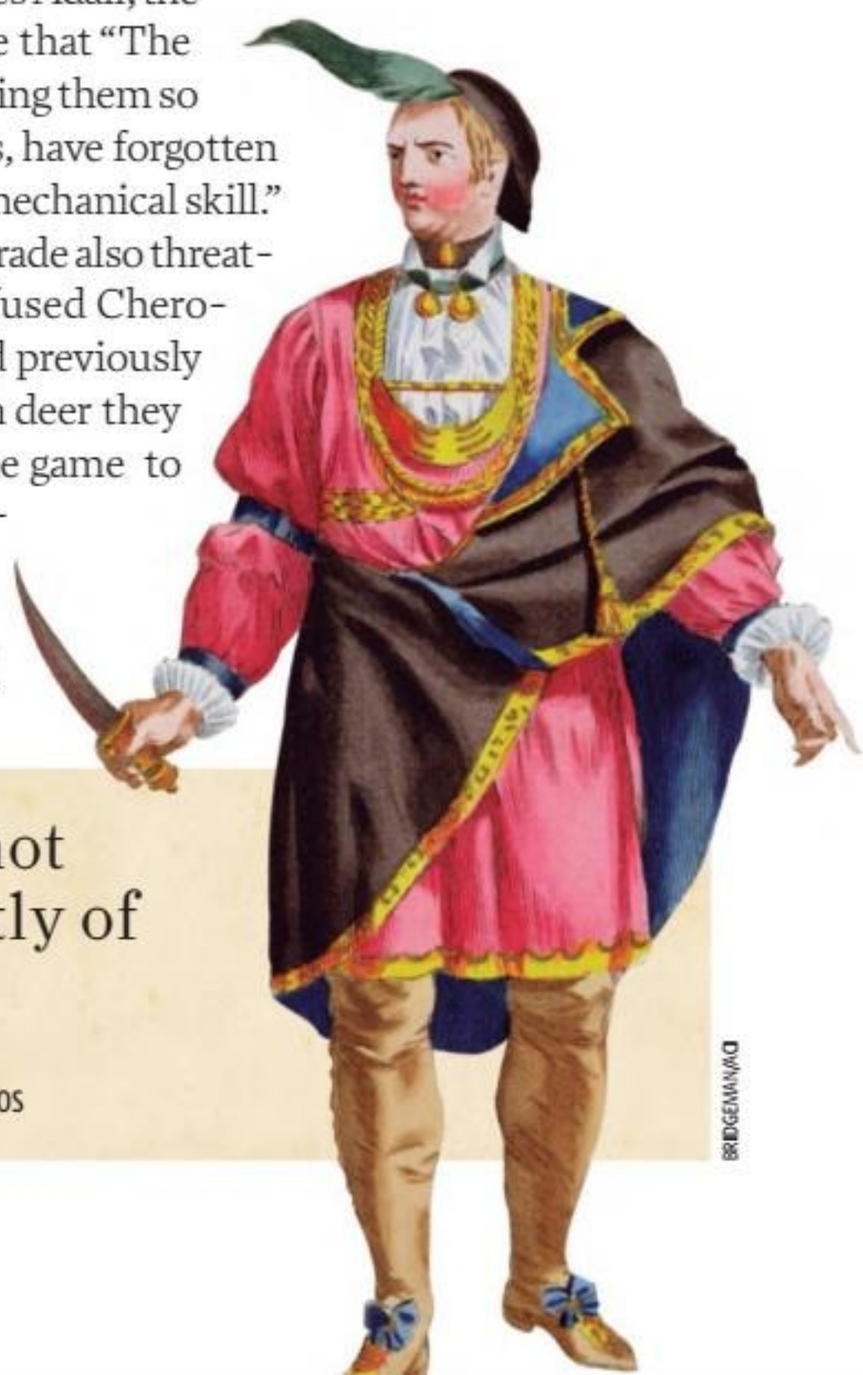
CHEROKEE FAMILIES usually maintained small gardens close to their homes, where vegetables would be grown and a corncrib would store their maize. The Europeans introduced both horses and cattle into the Cherokee way of life, but they didn't really become husbandmen until the end of the 18th century. By this time most Cherokee were living in Western-style log cabins (above).

the Cherokee to rethink their entire universe in the 18th century.

The emergence of the deerskin trade with British merchants unbalanced the Cherokee economy and culture. Cherokees had always been self-sufficient—growing, hunting, or making everything they needed. However, by the mid-18th century colonial traders had drawn most Cherokee towns into a European-style trade and credit economy. Traveling merchants out of Charles Town provided them with guns and ammunition, iron tools, cloth, and whiskey. These sales were made on credit, and Cherokee hunters were required to repay their debts with deerskins and other pelts. As a result, Cherokee hunters abandoned the bow for the rifle.

At the same time women left behind their ability to transform skins into clothing and began purchasing cotton and wool cloth; they traded their clay vessels and weaved baskets for metal pots and pans. While the new technology perhaps made life easier, there were tragic consequences: In 1745 a Cherokee chief acknowledged that "My people cannot live independently of the English." This reliance on foreign goods led to a form of social amnesia. James Adair, the 18th-century naturalist, wrote that "The Indian, by reason of our supplying them so cheap with every sort of goods, have forgotten the chief part of their ancient mechanical skill."

The dependency on foreign trade also threatened the spiritualism that infused Cherokee society. While hunters had previously apologized to the spirit of each deer they killed and put every part of the game to good use, the commercial deerskin trade encouraged killing by the gross. The special relationship between hunter and



BRIDGEMAN/ALA

"My people cannot live independently of the English."

CHEROKEE CHIEF CUNNE SHOTE, IN THE 1780S

GENDER ROLES IN CHEROKEE SOCIETY

CHEROKEE MEN AND WOMEN had distinct responsibilities. Women gathered firewood, collected water, nuts, and fruits, prepared hunted skins, made clothes, baskets, and pottery, and cared for the home and children. Their most important role was producing vegetables, the corn, beans, squash, and melons that made up the core of Cherokee diet. Corn was considered spiritual, as it had been introduced by Selu, the corn mother. Growing corn defined a woman's femininity (brides gave husbands an ear of corn), and women usually worked the cornfields as a community, making this hard work a joyous social enterprise.

Just as women were associated with their agricultural role, men were identified as hunters and warriors; both of these involved specific religious rituals and spiritual deliberation. Men hunted deer, bear, and small mammals with bows and arrows until they began acquiring firearms. They also used blowguns to hunt small animals and teach boys to hunt. A variety of poles, traps, weirs, and spears were used to fish the rivers, creeks, and lakes. Some men served as spiritual leaders; the most politically adept sat as chiefs and clan elders. Men also helped clear fields for planting, constructed homes and public buildings, and played in games such as stickball. This was similar to lacrosse but played with two shorter sticks. Referred to as the "little brother to war," it was a preparation for combat.

▲ Acorns

The Cherokee, like many Native American tribes, harvested acorns from oak trees. Although bitter, natural processing made them taste nutty and good to use in stew and bread.

◀ Deer Whistle

Deer were an essential element of Cherokee life and were plentiful in the woodlands of the Appalachian mountains. Clay whistles like this were used to attract deer while hunting.

LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM: GETTY IMAGES; NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM/IMAGE FOTOSTOCK; BRIDGEMAN/ACK; MARILYN ANGEL WYNN/NATIVESTOCK PICTURES

GRAINGER COLLECTION/AGE FOTOSTOCK

MAKING THE CHEROKEE AMERICAN

EUROPEAN TRADE transformed Cherokee dress. Chief Cunne Shote (left) fits an 18th-century description of Cherokee men as "of middle stature, of an olive colour, tho' generally painted, and their skins stained with gunpowder pricked into it in very pretty figures. The hair of their head is shaved . . . except a patch on the hinder part of the head . . . which is ornamented with beads, feathers, wampum, stained deers' hair, and such baubles." Some "wear a collar of wampum . . . a silver breastplate, and bracelets on their arms and wrists of the same metal, a bit of cloth over their private parts, a shirt of English make, a sort of cloth-boots and moccasins . . . ornamented with porcupine quills; a large mantle or matchcoat thrown over all completes their dress at home."

prey diminished as trade debts induced hunters to kill as many fur-bearing animals as they could. Some families ran up debts that could never be paid off with skins alone, so traders seized family members and sold them into slavery. This provoked bitter animosity and in some cases pulled the Cherokee into violent clashes with Europeans. To settle large debts the Carolina colonial government sometimes demanded that Cherokee communities surrender land. Indeed the ceding of territory became a customary Cherokee tactic to maintain or restore good relations with colonial and American governments.

The arrival of Christian missionaries also affected the Cherokee worldview. Several denominations sent agents into Cherokee towns to build churches and schools. It's unclear just how successful these missions were, but certainly by the 19th century a large number of Cherokee practiced the faith, even as they retained aspects of their traditional beliefs. In the wake of the missionaries came the thousands of settlers who trespassed on Cherokee lands, provoking unrest and conflict. Colonial and Cherokee relations were often torn asunder by the invasions of squatters who moved in without title or claim, and often showed little respect for the indigenous inhabitants.

A Tribe Transformed

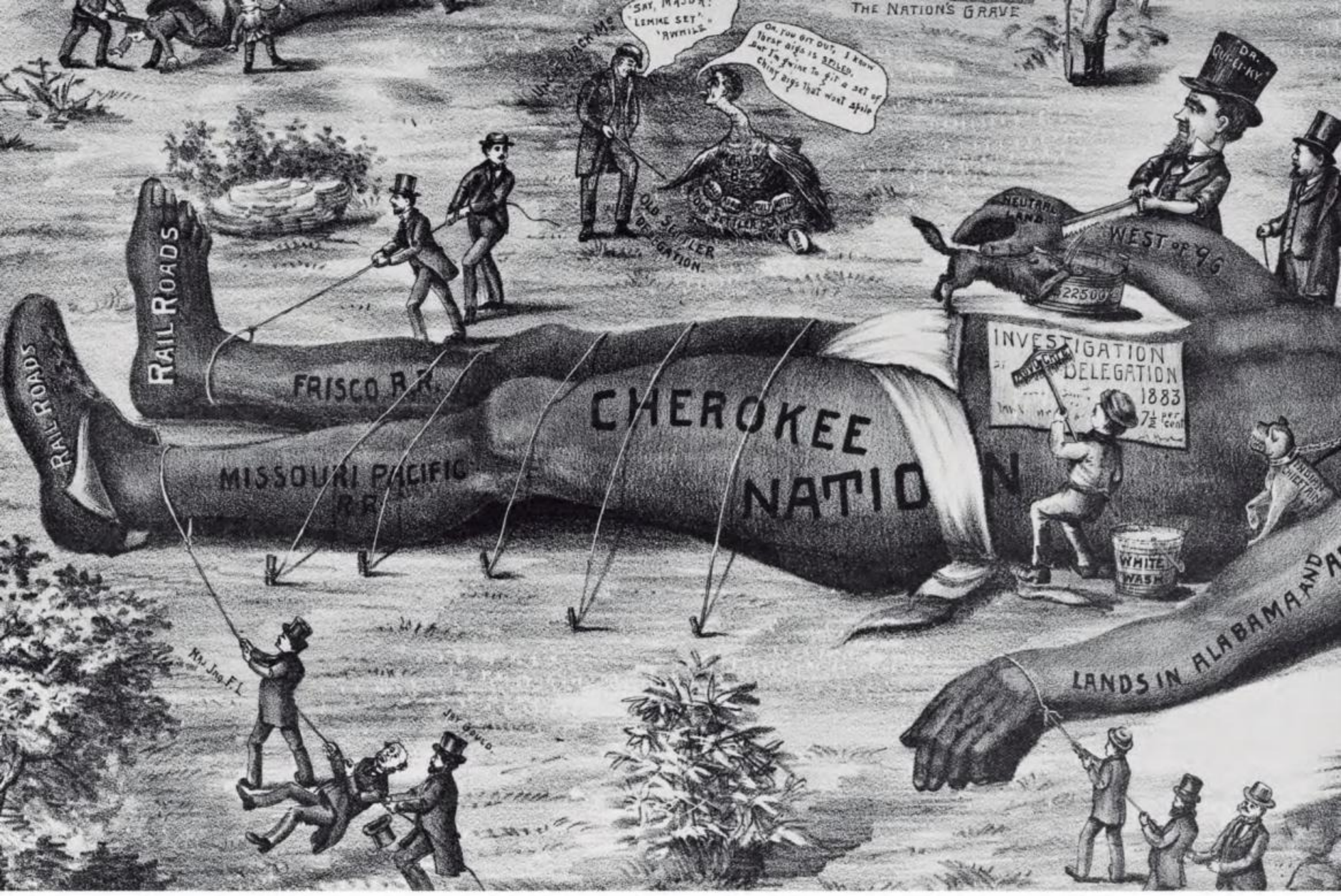
In the face of this Anglo-European invasion some Cherokee withdrew into the mountains to escape the foreigners and their influences, while others argued for peaceful accommodation. However, the settlers and their ideas also triggered revitalization movements all over eastern North America. Prophets such as the Shawnee spiritualist Tenskwatawa called for Indians to abandon Western notions, return to traditional ways, and drive the settlers back to the East. The Cherokee experienced their own nativist Ghost Dance rebellion in the early 19th century, but it did little to stem the settler tide.

Perhaps the most powerful Cherokee response to the settler invasion was the movement toward a form of centralized government. In the mid-18th century,

A CIVILIZATION PROGRAM

The U.S. government encouraged Cherokee men to swap hunting for farming, while women should stay home and weave. It was asking them to give up activities that defined their gender, learn English, become Christians, and join the market economy.

CORBIS/CORDON PRESS


THE NATION'S GRAVE
"SAY, MAJOR! LEMME SET AWHILE"
OH, YOU GIT OUT, I KNOW THESE BIGS IS SPILED. BUT I'M GWINE TO FIT A SET OF CHINY BIGS THAT WON'T SPOIL
OLD SETTLER DELEGATION.
RAIL ROADS
RAIL ROADS
FRISCO R.R.
MISSOURI PACIFIC R.R.
CHEROKEE NATION
NEUTRAL LAND
$22500
WEST OF 96
INVESTIGATION DELEGATION 1883 7½ per cent
WHITE WASH
LANDS IN ALABAMA AND
JAY GOULD.

Cherokee towns began to meet in regional councils for mutual defense. These were often held in a "mother town" such as Tannassie, Tugaloo, or Chota. As conflict with settler communities became common, war leaders like Kanagatucko grew more influential. Indeed, Kanagatucko tried to bring the town and regional councils together, into a grand Cherokee council, to deal with the issues raised by the settlers. Over time, Cherokee towns surrendered political authority to an emerging national council that comprised representatives from the towns. It met at Chota until the 1770s.

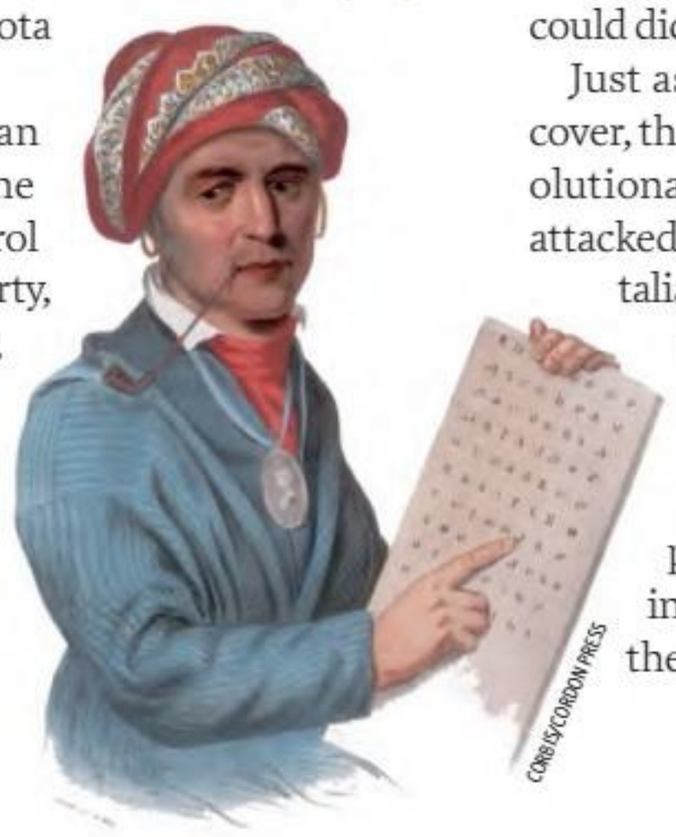
The Seven Years' War and the American Revolutionary War demonstrated that the Cherokee needed to establish national control over their warriors. In 1756 a Cherokee war party, ironically allied with the British, was traveling north to attack the French and Shawnees in the Ohio Valley when several of them were killed and scalped by Virginia settlers. In revenge Cherokee warriors began to attack colonial settlements. After several battles and some efforts to negotiate peace, British armies invaded in 1760 and 1761 and destroyed dozens of Cherokee towns. These demoralizing military defeats and a subsequent smallpox epidemic halved the Cherokee population, ending their preeminence in the Southeast. Before 1760 the Cherokee had been able to play France, Britain, and the colonies against each other for their own economic and political aggrandizement. However, the 1763 Treaty of Paris removed the French from their western borders and placed the British colonies in the south, where they could dictate conditions to the Indians.

Just as the Cherokee were beginning to recover, they were pulled into the American Revolutionary War. Allied with the British, they attacked American settlements, provoking retaliation from four American state militias that in 1776 destroyed more than 50 Cherokee towns.

In 1785 the Cherokee finally ended hostilities with the United States and placed themselves under its protection in the Treaty of Hopewell. This required the Cherokee to cede an additional 6,381

SEQUOYAH'S SYLLABARY

Convinced that a written language would help maintain their independence Sequoyah (below) created a simple system of 86 symbols that represented all the syllables of the Cherokee language.



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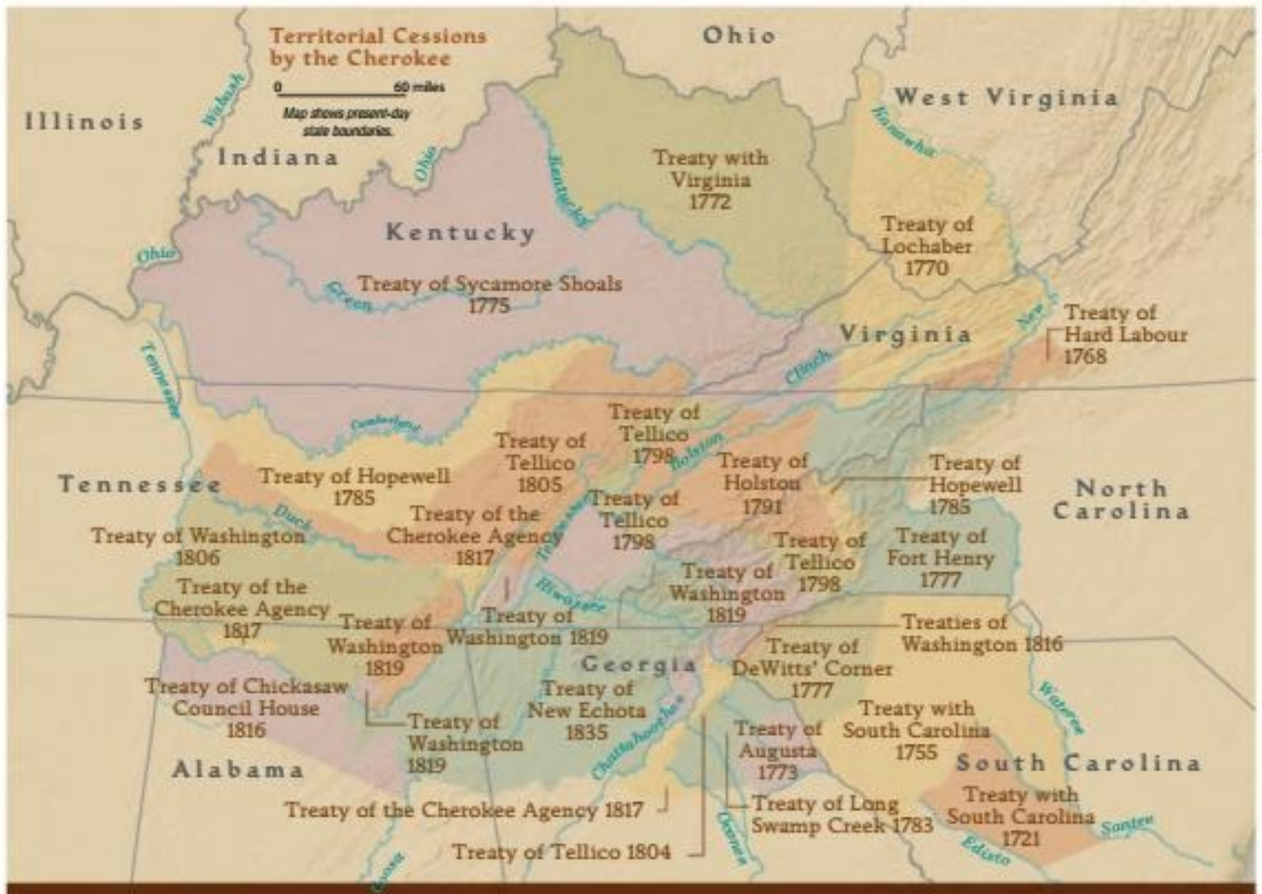


ATLAS OF INDIAN NATIONS, NG BOOKS

BROKEN PROMISES

AN 1886 CARTOON (left) illustrates how U.S. government promises that the Cherokee would be left alone as a sovereign people in Indian territory proved false. The Cherokee had to constantly defend their rights and political autonomy long after the series of formal treaties that carved up their territory piecemeal (above).

MAP SHOWING THE SURRENDER OF CHEROKEE LAND TO COLONIAL AND U.S. GOVERNMENTS.

square miles; in just over 50 years they had surrendered half of their territory.

From Resistance to Republic

Fortunately for the Cherokee, a new type of leader arose in the late 18th and early 19th centuries: Bicultural, English-speaking entrepreneurs adept at communicating with both traditional Cherokee and American politicians and capitalists. These leaders grew skilled at political lobbying and were comfortable using the language of sovereignty to enhance and protect Cherokee interests. John Ross, who served as Cherokee principal chief for 40 years, was the best example of the new class. Yet, like most Cherokee, these men were opposed to surrendering any more land and wanted the Cherokee to remain a separate and sovereign people.

The emergence of this class coincided with the United States' development of a "civilization program" to help American Indians acculturate to Anglo-American ways and prepare them for assimilation. Many Cherokee embraced the notion of civilization, and non-Indians often identified the Cherokee as "the civilized tribe." This perception was enhanced by the work of Sequoyah, who invented a Cherokee syllabary, which enabled them to read, write, record their laws, and publish materials in their own language. By 1828 the Cherokee government was publishing the *Cherokee Phoenix,* a newspaper that used alternating columns of Cherokee and English script.

Over the following decades Cherokee leaders completed the transformation of their political society from the small autonomous towns of the early 18th century to a constitutional republic. The movement toward centralization was spurred on by U.S. efforts to force the Cherokee to give up their land and relocate west of the Mississippi River, an idea proffered by Thomas Jefferson after the Louisiana Purchase, in 1803. In 1809 around a thousand Cherokee dissidents left their homes and migrated to Arkansas. More followed during the years 1817-19. However, those wanting to leave were a small minority. The Cherokee national council responded by codifying the principle that its land was held

in common, making it a capital offense for any individual to cede national territory.

The Cherokee government continued to reform its political and judicial institutions, using its social acculturation and political innovation to demonstrate to the United States and the world that its people were as civilized, and its political structure as progressive, as any other. In the early 19th century the national council abandoned the controversial practice of blood revenge. It was replaced with written laws, a court system, and a police force called the Cherokee Lighthorse Guard.

In 1820 the nation eliminated town council representation and created eight electoral districts that sent delegates to a bicameral legislature. The government then established an independent judiciary with a hierarchical system of trial and appellate courts, overseen by appointed judges supported by marshals and constables. Disappointed litigants could appeal to the Cherokee Supreme Court, which opened for business in the newly founded Cherokee national capital, New Echota, in 1825.

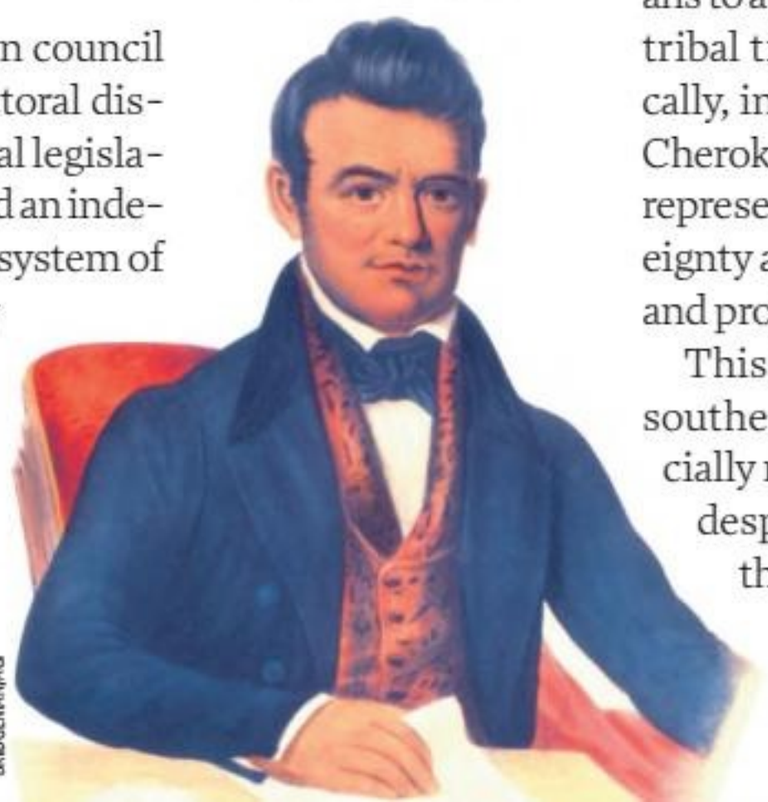
The Cherokee government, led by an executive called the "principal chief," legislated on a variety of nationally significant issues. In addition to expanding its authority in the area of criminal justice, it passed laws regulating alcohol and gambling; issued bonds, levied taxes, and controlled interest rates; approved roads and ferries; authorized business licenses; and regulated the rights and responsibilities of slave owners.

The U.S. government hoped its civilization policy would induce anglicized American Indians to abandon their traditional ways, forgo their tribal ties, and assimilate, socially and politically, into the American republic. Instead, the Cherokee leadership used European notions of representative government and national sovereignty as a strategy to maintain their autonomy and protect their territorial integrity.

This infuriated expansionist leaders of the southern states. Their constituents were racially reluctant to live alongside Cherokee and desperately wanted to seize their lands for the burgeoning cotton economy. Cherokee

SUCCESSFUL IN BUSINESS

John Ross (below) was the first principal chief elected under the Cherokee nation's new constitution. He was part of a small group of Cherokees who grew so rich that they built cotton plantations, lived in colonial mansions, and owned slaves.



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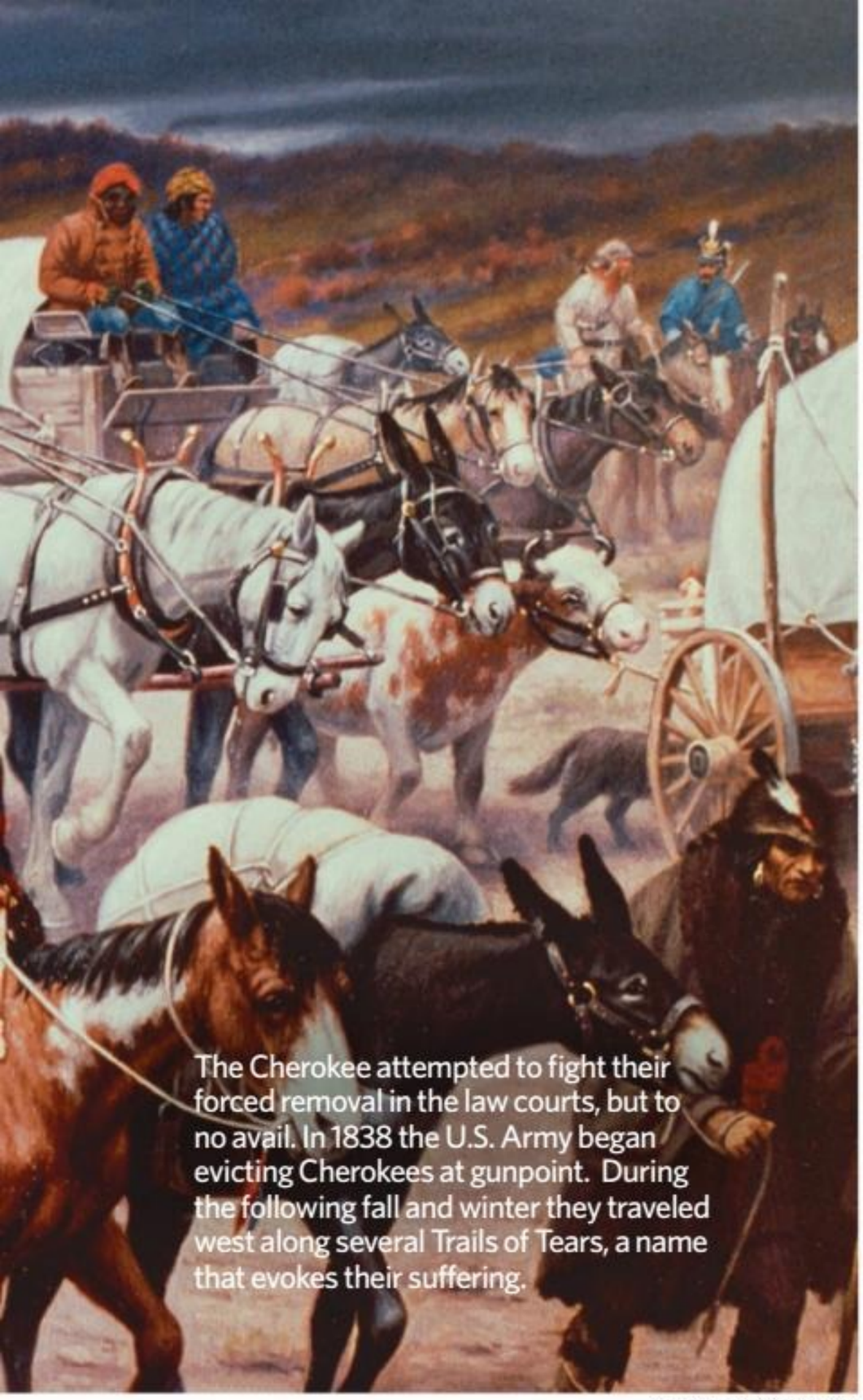

The Cherokee attempted to fight their forced removal in the law courts, but to no avail. In 1838 the U.S. Army began evicting Cherokees at gunpoint. During the following fall and winter they traveled west along several Trails of Tears, a name that evokes their suffering.

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M. JUÁREZ LUGO/ZUMA PRESS/CORBIS/CORDON PRESS

THE MODERN CHEROKEE

THREE FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED CHEROKEE NATIONS exist today. In Oklahoma the Cherokee Nation and the United Keetowah Band of Cherokee Indians are descended from those who migrated west in the 19th century. A few Cherokees fled into the mountains of North Carolina and are now the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation.

MODERN CHEROKEE TAKING PART IN TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES

proclamations of national sovereignty particularly antagonized the removal advocates in Georgia, and in the late 1820s the state attempted to extend its jurisdiction over the Cherokee people and abolish Cherokee laws and institutions. In response, on July 26, 1827, the Cherokee nation adopted a republican constitution.

Its ratification sent a strong message to Georgia, the rest of the United States, and the world that, as principal chief John Ross put it, the Cherokee nation had "always maintained sovereign jurisdiction over its territorial limits," and had "never surrendered her right to self-government."

Georgia escalated its pressure on the government to remove the Cherokee. When Andrew Jackson was elected president in 1828, the state gained a powerful and popular ally who promised to remove the Indian tribes from the East. In 1830 Congress, at Jackson's behest, passed a bill authorizing the president to negotiate removal treaties with the Indian nations. In 1835 a small dissident Cherokee faction signed a removal treaty that required their entire people to move west within two years. In the fall and winter of 1838–1839 the Cherokee traveled along several Trails of Tears to what is now northeastern Oklahoma; perhaps as many as a quarter of the Cherokee population died as a consequence. Once in the West, however, the Cherokee restored their national institutions and reinvigorated their economy; there were many battles ahead, but they had overcome an existential challenge to their civilization through resilience, adaptation, determination, and courage. ■

TIM ALAN GARRISON
GARRISON COMBINES HIS LEGAL AND HISTORICAL EXPERTISE TO EXPLORE THE ROLE OF LAW AND LEGISLATION IN NATIVE INDIAN HISTORY.

Learn more

BOOKS

"Our Cause Will Ultimately Triumph": Profiles in American Indian Sovereignty
Tim Alan Garrison, Carolina Academic Press, 2014.

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The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears
Theda Perdue & Michael Green, Penguin Books, 2008.

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M. Anna Fariello, The History Press, 2009.

THE MYTHS, LEGENDS, AND

The Origins of Disease and Medicine as Explained by the Cherokee

In the old days the beasts, birds, fishes, insects, and plants could all talk, and they and the people lived together in peace and friendship. But as time went on, the people increased so rapidly that their settlements spread over the whole Earth, and the poor animals found themselves beginning to be cramped for room. This was bad enough, but to make it worse, Man invented bows, knives, blowguns, spears, and hooks, and began to slaughter the larger animals, birds, and fishes for their flesh or their skins, while the smaller creatures, such as the frogs and worms, were crushed and trodden upon without thought, out of pure carelessness or contempt. So the Animals resolved to consult upon measures for their common safety.

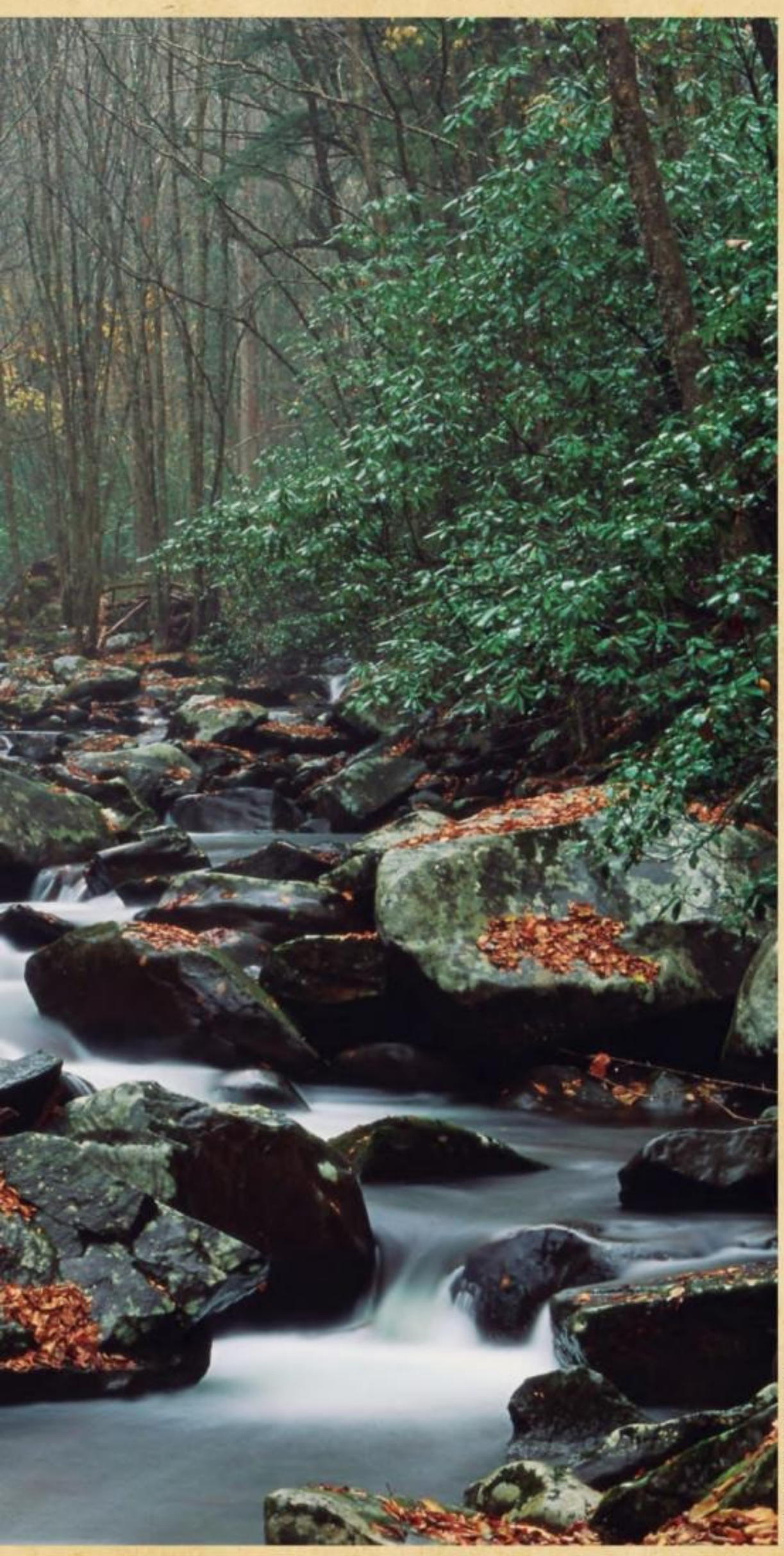
The Bears were the first to meet in council, in their town house under Kuwâ'hï Mountain, the "Mulberry place," and the old White Bear chief presided. After each in turn had complained of the way in which Man killed their friends, ate their flesh, and used their skins for his own purposes, it was decided to begin war at once against him . . . [The other animals held similar meetings.] One after another denounced Man's cruelty and injustice toward the other animals and voted in favor of his death . . . They began then to devise and name so many new diseases, one after another, that had not their invention at last failed them, no one of the human race would have been able to survive.

When the Plants, who were friendly to Man, heard what had been done by the animals, they determined to defeat the latter's evil designs. Each Tree, Shrub, and Herb, down even to the Grasses and Mosses, agreed to furnish a cure ... and each said, "I shall appear to help Man when he calls upon me in his need." Thus came medicine; and the Plants, every one of which has its use if we only knew it, furnish the remedy to counteract the evil wrought by the revengeful animals. Even weeds were made for some good purpose, which we must find out for ourselves. When the doctor does not know what medicine to use for a sick man, the spirit of the plant tells him.

BLACKBERRIES, KNOWN BY THE CHEROKEE TO HAVE HEALING PROPERTIES, WERE USED IN TREATING DIARRHEA.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

TALES OF THE CHEROKEE



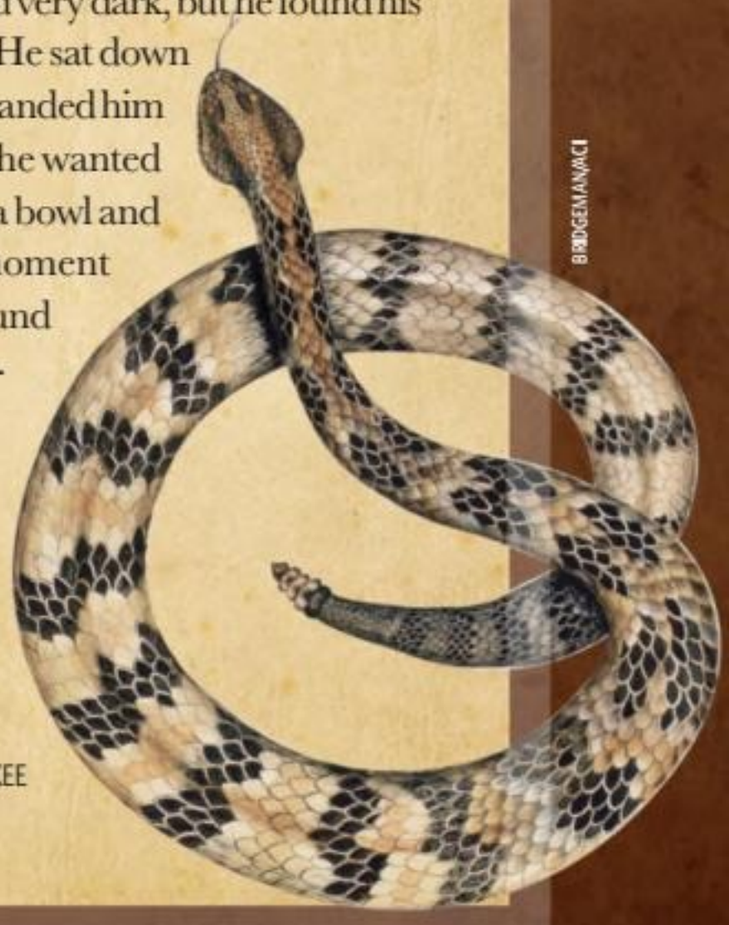
JAY DICKMAN/CORBIS; CORDON PRESS

The Rattlesnake's Revenge, a Children's Story to Endorse Blood Revenge

One day in the old times, when we could still talk with other creatures, while some children were playing about the house, their mother heard them scream. Running outside, she found that a rattlesnake had crawled from the grass, and taking up a stick, she killed it. The father was out hunting in the mountains, and that evening, when coming home after dark through the gap, he heard a strange wailing sound. Looking about, he found that he had come into the midst of a whole company of rattlesnakes, which all had their mouths open and seemed to be crying. He asked them the reason for their trouble, and they told him that his own wife had that day killed their chief, the Yellow Rattlesnake, and they were just now about to send the Black Rattlesnake to take revenge.

The hunter said he was very sorry, but they told him that if he spoke the truth he must be ready to make satisfaction and give his wife as a sacrifice for the life of their chief. Not knowing what might happen otherwise, he consented. They then told him that the Black Rattlesnake would go home with him and coil up just outside the door in the dark. He must go inside, where he would find his wife awaiting him, and ask her to get him a drink of fresh water from the spring. That was all.

He went home and knew that the Black Rattlesnake was following. It was night when he arrived and very dark, but he found his wife waiting with his supper ready. He sat down and asked for a drink of water. She handed him a gourdful from the jar, but he said he wanted it fresh from the spring, so she took a bowl and went out of the door. The next moment he heard a cry, and going out he found that the Black Rattlesnake had bitten her and that she was already dying. He stayed with his wife until she was dead, and the Black Rattlesnake came out from the grass again and said his tribe was now satisfied.



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RATTLESNAKES FEATURE IN A NUMBER OF CHEROKEE STORIES, OFTEN WITH AN EDGE OF TREACHERY.

The Enigma of Easter Island

Explorers in the 18th century hoped to find the unusual. But when sailors made landfall on a tiny and remote Pacific island, they found much more than they could ever have imagined: A people with a mysterious past and monumental statues that seemed far beyond their scarce means.

In 1722 three ships commanded by the Dutch Captain Jacob Roggeveen sighted a flat, low island in the Pacific, 2,200 miles west of Chile. It was Easter Sunday, so they named the new land Easter Island. When the Dutch disembarked, they were surprised to find that despite its incredibly remote location the island was inhabited. The natives called the island Rapa Nui, and this became the name for its inhabitants.

However, what the sailors found even more surprising than the presence of humans was a landscape studded with huge humanlike stone figures. There are roughly a thousand of these *moai*, many standing up to 30 feet tall and weighing thousands of pounds. Their highly distinctive design features a head with large ears, shoulders, and upper arms. A prominent nose protrudes from their faces, and some have carved, reddish stone headdresses, called *pukao*. Many are set on large basalt altars (*ahu*).

The Head Makers

It is still difficult to understand how the island's sparse and impoverished population managed to create such impressive monuments. The English explorer Captain James Cook briefly visited Easter Island in 1774 and expressed his admiration for the people who had hauled such mighty statues into place and, in some cases, then lowered the separate stone headdresses onto them. He "could hardly conceive how these islanders, wholly unacquainted with any mechanical power, could raise such stupendous figures."

The construction of the figures remained a mystery until the first proper research was begun in the early 20th century. A decisive contribution was made by Katherine Routledge (1866-1935), one of the first women to study archaeology at Oxford University. A specialist in black African societies, in 1910 she and her husband began planning a scientific expedition to Easter Island. They set sail from England in 1913 and after a lengthy voyage via Brazil and Patagonia, they reached Easter Island on March 29, 1914. Katherine and her team carried out

W. BUSS/AGE FOTOSTOCK

WOODEN BOARD ENGRAVED WITH *RONGORONGO* SCRIPT, HANGA ROA MUSEUM, EASTER ISLAND

MOAI lie toppled and half buried in the Rano Raraku volcano, one of three quarries from which stone for the statues was taken.

BOB KRIST/CORBIS; © ORDON PRESS

1914-1915
Katherine Routledge works on the island, excavating and cataloging the statues and recording local culture.

1956
Thor Heyerdahl, a Norwegian explorer, suggests the island's first inhabitants arrived on rafts from the Americas.

1998
Jo Anne van Tilburg, an archaeologist, experiments with raising a ten-ton moai with logs, rope, and just 40 people.

2012
Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo argue that far from being ruined by deforestation, islanders built a thriving agricultural economy.

excavations and cataloged moai, altars, and platforms. She also interviewed locals and recorded vast amounts of information about their myths and legends. Even so, no one could explain how or why the great stone figures had been erected.

Educated Guesses

Routledge's research took her to a quarry in the crater of the Rano Raraku volcano, where rock for the statues had been obtained. Struck by the large number of sculptures she found, some 394, many unfinished or half buried, Routledge wrote, "Here images lie by the score in all stages of evolution, just as they were left when, for some unknown reason, the workmen laid down their tools for the last time and the busy scene was still."

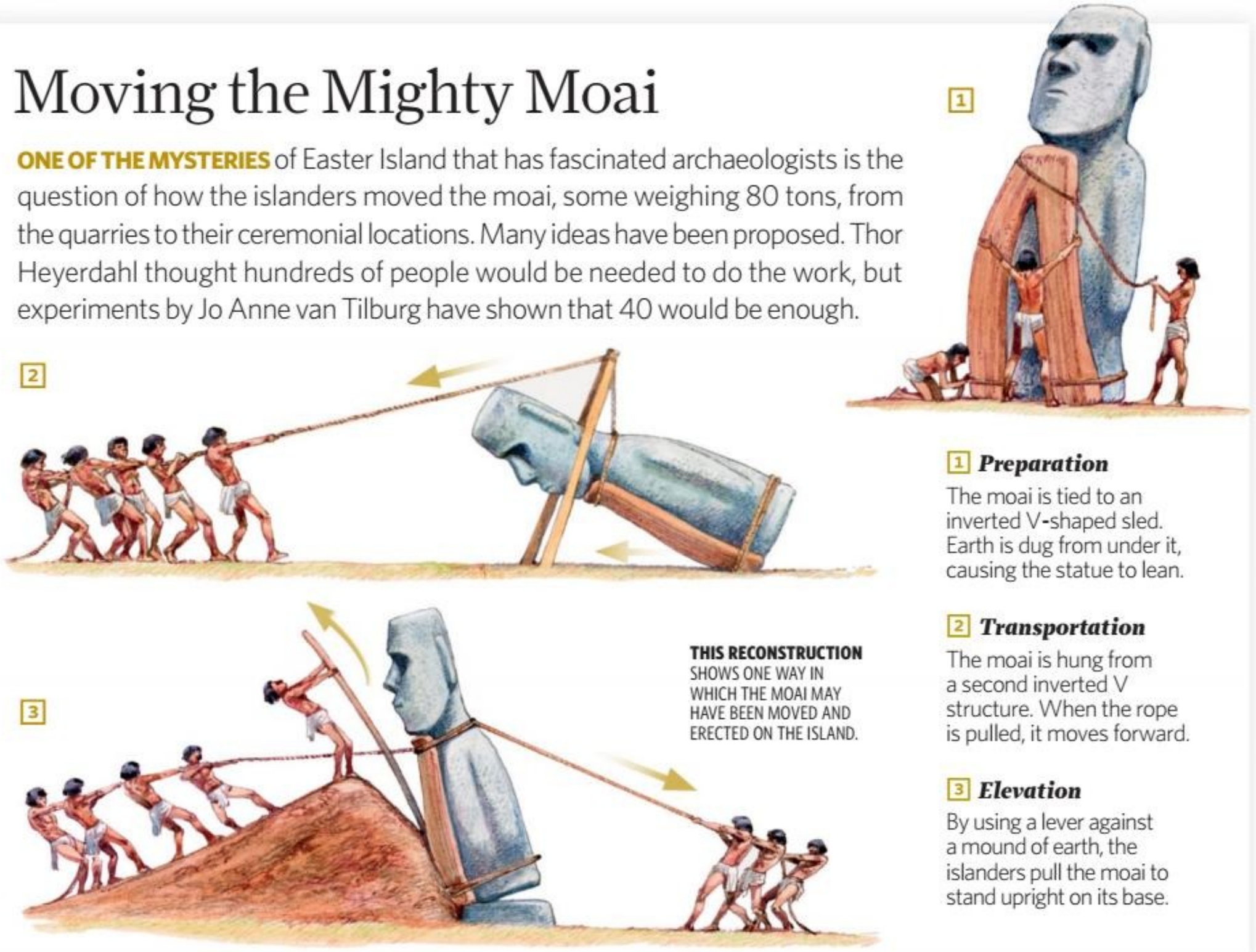
VOICES OF THE MOAI

KATHERINE ROUTLEDGE suffered from paranoid schizophrenia all her life. She managed to keep the disorder at bay while on Easter Island, but subsequently her mental health deteriorated. She believed she could hear the moai's spirits talking and thought that her husband wanted to kill her.

A MEMBER OF ROUTLEDGE'S TEAM SITS NEXT TO A LARGE TOPPLED MOAI IN 1914.

Moving the Mighty Moai

ONE OF THE MYSTERIES of Easter Island that has fascinated archaeologists is the question of how the islanders moved the moai, some weighing 80 tons, from the quarries to their ceremonial locations. Many ideas have been proposed. Thor Heyerdahl thought hundreds of people would be needed to do the work, but experiments by Jo Anne van Tilburg have shown that 40 would be enough.



GETTY IMAGES

THIS RECONSTRUCTION SHOWS ONE WAY IN WHICH THE MOAI MAY HAVE BEEN MOVED AND ERECTED ON THE ISLAND.

1 *Preparation*
The moai is tied to an inverted V-shaped sled. Earth is dug from under it, causing the statue to lean.

2 *Transportation*
The moai is hung from a second inverted V structure. When the rope is pulled, it moves forward.

3 *Elevation*
By using a lever against a mound of earth, the islanders pull the moai to stand upright on its base.

Routledge also studied the mysterious writing found on boards and stone slabs. Known as *rongorongo*, it has still not been deciphered. She also analyzed the designs engraved on the sculptures' bases. Comparing these with the tattoos sported by the islanders, and noting their similarity, she concluded that the people who carved the statues were the direct ancestors of the island's present indigenous population.

The Routledges left Easter Island in 1915. Katherine published her conclusions in her 1919 book, *The Mystery of Easter Island.* Two years later *National Geographic* published an article with the same title in which Routledge reported on the expedition. She hypothesized that an ecological disaster had caused a crisis in Easter Island society, ending the monumental building program. This idea has since been confirmed by researchers who have reconstructed the various stages of the island's history and analyzed its archaeological record. Indeed the enigmatic island has attracted the attention of many scholars over the past century, including Norwegian ethnologist and explorer Thor Heyerdahl and American archaeologist Jo Anne van Tilburg. She set up the Easter Island Statue Project in 1982 to promote the study of local culture and protect and preserve its rich legacy.

What Befell Them

Thanks to the research of these academics, we now know that Polynesian seafarers colonized Easter Island around a thousand years ago. The huge altars and statues were erected around 1200. The heads represented ancestral spirits and were placed near the communal homes of the natives as a focus for rituals and ceremonies.

What happened to this society is a matter of scholarly debate. Some maintain the islanders overused stone and wood, bringing about an ecological collapse. Ancestor worship came to an end and a new warrior caste took power, toppling the obsolete moai.

A 2012 study by archaeologists Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo offers a striking alternative. Rats, carried in canoes by the settlers, denuded the island of trees. But far from suffering ecological ruin, the islanders used the deforested areas for agriculture, which fed its population for centuries.

Did European explorers find a society in ruins or thriving? The magnificent statues are not the only Easter Island mysteries that continue to intrigue.

—*Carme Mayans*

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and through time

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Next Issue

CHRISTIE'S IMAGES/CORBIS/CORDON PRESS

THE MEETING THAT SEALED THE FATE OF ROME

MARK ANTONY summoned Queen Cleopatra to answer accusations that she had supported his enemies in the civil wars that were tearing the Roman Republic apart. Cleopatra decided to dazzle the man with all the allure, exoticism, and wealth she and Egypt could offer. It worked. Mark Antony was instantly captivated and soon began the famous love affair that would complicate and compromise the survival of the Roman Republic itself. It was a romance played out amid war, treachery, tragedy, and excess.

LUCKY LEIF ERIKSSON—THE MAN WHO FOUND AMERICA

THE VIKINGS TERRORIZED EUROPE for over 300 years. Along coastlines and rivers, wherever there was water, their swift and strong sailing ships carried these raiders and traders east into the heart of Russia and far beyond the western islands of Scotland. For the Vikings were the undisputed masters of the oceans, exploring and exploiting new sea routes that eventually led them to discover the land that would one day be known as America. The Viking sagas tell the extraordinary story of "Lucky" Leif Eriksson, who boldly sailed from Iceland to Greenland to Vinland—the land now known as Newfoundland.

IBERFOTO/PHOTOAISA

Britain's Battle Against Slavery

In the nineteenth century a few outspoken Britons began a tidal wave of protests that saw prime ministers, politicians, and the public turn against the evils of the slave trade.

The Rise and Fall of the Parthenon

The Parthenon's iconic frame still dominates the skyline of Athens. But its skeletal remains merely hint at former glory, a symbol of power stripped bare by centuries of conflict.

The Emperor's Double-Edged Sword

The Praetorian Guard was Rome's elite army, the emperor's trusted bodyguards. This privileged position brought political power—they could save their ward or stab him in the back.

A Plague that Transformed Europe

In just four terrifying years the Black Death swept through Europe, killing one person in three. With millions dead, this catastrophic event forced a major reset of medieval society.

eye to eye

Durban

SOUTH AFRICA

“Mr. President, I have come to report to you that South Africa is free today.”

Nelson Mandela (Nelson Mandela casting his vote at Ohlange High School, Durban, 1994)

Durban (in Zulu ‘eThekwini’, derived from itheku meaning a bay or lagoon). A city established in 1824 on land granted by King Shaka. A fusion of citizens of Zulu, English and Indian heritage. A tourist mecca for over 150 years.

eye to eye

Durban

SOUTH AFRICA

"The greatness of a nation,
and its moral progress can be
judged by the way its animals are treated."

Mahatma Gandhi (Durban resident 1893 – 1914)

Durban (in Zulu 'eThekwini', derived from itheku meaning a bay or lagoon). A city established in 1824 on land granted by King Shaka. A fusion of citizens of Zulu, English and Indian heritage. A tourist mecca for over 150 years.